





# THE SECOND QUARTER

*December 1939 — February 1940*

*Author of*

ORIENTATIONS

HANDBOOK OF CYPRUS

A RECORD OF THE WAR  
THE FIRST QUARTER







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THE QUEEN

*A Record of the War*

# THE SECOND QUARTER

*December 1939—February 1940*

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## P R E F A C E

THE favourable reception extended by the public to the first volume of Hutchinson's *Quarterly Record of the War*, has confirmed them in their determination to continue the series, despite the rapidly increasing cost of production and the inhuman dearth of paper. Apologies are due for the delay in completion of Volume II owing to the indisposition of the author.

This book contains no pre-history, the necessities of which were met in its predecessor. Hostilities in the three elements on various fronts open the story, culminating in the tragic heroism of Finland. There follow two chapters on the war efforts and problems of the United Kingdom and the Empire, and a survey of the actions and reactions of the neutral States most directly affected by the war.

I would repeat my debt of gratitude to the members of *The Times* staff, and in particular to Mr Philip Graves, to the *Reports on Foreign Affairs* of the Empire Parliamentary Association, to several of the Embassies and Legations, to Sir Hugh Walpole, Sir Stephen Tallents, Mr Harold Nicolson, and, again, to my research-worker, Mr George Greer, and my secretary, Miss Irene Baker. Above all, to the vision, revision, and supervision of my wife.



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*Part One*

*Hostilities*



# CHAPTER I

## I MILITARY OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

December broke bitterly over Northern and Eastern France, and before the month ended all the Western Front was enduring the rigours of an almost Arctic winter. British troops had taken over a sector of the Maginot Line in the first days of the month and as time passed their holding was steadily extended. The King spent five days (December 5-9) at the Front, reviewing and inspecting British and French units, the Allied air forces, parts of the Maginot Line and the British zone behind the Front. His visit had a tonic effect upon the troops. It was not until December 9 that British patrols first collided with Germans, when Corporal T. W. Friday was killed leading a patrol—the first British soldier, according to a War Office statement, to fall in action in this war. The Germans, nevertheless, continued to maintain until January was far advanced that they had seen nothing of the British troops save on one occasion when a mortally wounded British officer was taken prisoner. This was, of course, part of their propaganda and was designed to discourage the French by representing their Allies as either absent or “sitting tight in their dug-outs,” as the German News Agency averred on January 18. The statement was the more amusing since a few days earlier the Military Cross had been awarded to Captain Barclay, of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, and the Military Medal to Lance-Corporal Davis for gallantry and resource in a night encounter 1,200 yards in advance of our lines.

Such nocturnal conflicts on the British and French fronts taught the Allies to respect the craftsmanship of the German patrols. They were bold, enterprising and admirably led, and they had mastered the art of avoiding noise. "Even during the bitter spell which began at Christmas, when the most wary could hardly take ten paces without stumbling and slithering on the frozen snow, they were able to move with the silence of shadows."<sup>1</sup> Fortunately their opponents soon learnt the technique of night patrol fighting, and both British and French gave as good as they got during this period. The only occasion on which the Germans scored a hands-down success was when a mistake in the darkness brought a lorry containing some twenty Frenchmen into the German outpost lines.

The cold was bitterest in mid-January, when 40 degrees of frost were frequently registered. The outposts led a hard life, sleeping in shallow dug-outs or log huts in the woods. No fires were allowed and even physical exercises and the noisy stamping of feet on the echoing ground were forbidden. Pickaxes broke, so deeply had the frost penetrated the soil, in some areas the floods of early December had remained on the land to become sheets of ice and add to the dangers of transport. Frequent reliefs, however, provided a solution for the difficulty of maintaining men in the outposts lines in such severe conditions and these extreme rigours had only to be borne for a few days. The first Indian troops, a mule transport corps of Pathans and Punjabis from the Frontier, arrived in France at the beginning of January. They made an excellent impression. They were followed by the first Colonial contingent, also a mule transport unit, from Cyprus.

Owing to weather conditions and to the Germans'

<sup>1</sup> *The Times* (Special Correspondent), February 5

intelligible anxiety to economize petrol, hostile aerial activity was fitful during these three months and few machines were lost by either side. Now and again intervals of clear weather gave opportunities for reconnaissances, in which each side sent planes far into their opponents' territory. There was some more British pamphlet-dropping—a questionable exercise until German morale should become shaken, of which there was no sign—but bombing remained *tabu*. The British air photographers continued to show a high level of skill. In January Air-Marshal A. S. Barratt was appointed Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of British Air Forces in France. It was announced at the same time that the organization of the air forces in France had been modified. Air-Marshal Barratt's functions were defined. They comprised the chief command of the Royal Air Force in France, and the responsibility, in consultation with the Army Commanders-in-Chief concerned, for ensuring the most effective support by our air forces for the British and French armies, and for co-ordinating its operations with those of the French Air Force. The communiqué making the announcement added that relationship between the army and the Royal Air Force in France was based on the analogy of the existing relationship between the Royal Navy and the Coastal Command, R. A. F., and would ensure the closest co-operation between the two arms. To some critics the change appeared to reduce the cohesion between the bombing and the fighting forces. On the other hand, it disposed of rumours, based upon the predilection of some persons for "undivided control," that part of the air force was to be placed under the direct orders of the Expeditionary Force in France.

## 2 INDEPENDENT AIR WARFARE

While the second quarter of the war saw a certain extension of air operations, no unexpected technical developments marked their course. On the German side the attacks on Allied and neutral merchant shipping were not made with large forces and were decidedly fitful. Bad weather<sup>1</sup> and the need to husband fuel supplies, especially while Russia was heavily engaged in Finland, no doubt contributed to the weakness of the forces engaged in these attacks and in the occasional reconnaissances which the enemy carried out on the east coast of Britain. There was another explanation, *viz*, the German training which linked the air arm very closely to the army. Attacks on moving ships and overseas reconnaissance were not part of the general training scheme and it is likely enough that the enemy did not wish to risk too large a number of his relatively small force of pilots who had been specially trained for such operations until he had built up a large reserve to take their places. It was always possible, and indeed probable, that he would presently develop much greater strength in these directions than his earlier raids had promised. It is, at any rate, open to question whether the material damage and loss of life inflicted by the German attacks on shipping compensated the enemy for the bitterness aroused among neutrals and for the expenditure of petroleum, bombs and pilots which these attacks involved.

British air policy in the north was mainly defensive. We were somewhat handicapped by the fact that the Germans, whether on the Western Front or on their North Sea coast, had a much shorter line to defend by means of their fighting squadrons, while the whole

<sup>1</sup> Which did not reduce British air activities nearly as much



eastern side of Britain offered them a target, and its length entailed a relative dispersal of the defending aircraft of our Fighter and Coastal Commands. At sea the Germans, thanks to their addiction to methods of warfare described by their friends as totalitarian and by most civilized nations as barbarous, had the initiative. While our aircraft had to hunt for rare German warships and elusive submarines, the German airmen were surer of finding British or neutral merchantmen to bomb (or fishing smacks if larger prey failed) than they were of hitting them. The limitations imposed—perhaps wisely—on British and French air-bombing on land left a large field to the enemy and confined British effort to attacks on restricted and well-defended objectives. Our heavy bombers were used on many occasions for reconnaissance and for purposes of patrol, for which they were not designed and which had not been regarded as their principal function.

Reference has already been made to the air fighting, or rather air-skirmishing, on the Western Front. On the British coast the enemy opened December with mine dropping, and lost an aeroplane and its crew in the sea off East Anglia on the night of December 5-6. A group of nine machines that approached the Firth of Forth was driven off by our fighters, and there were other encounters with Dornier flying-boats and Heinkels during December. It was not until December 27, however, that one of these was certainly destroyed. The survivors were picked up by a Swedish merchantman and interned at the nearest port in Norway. 1940 began with the loss of two German machines, one destroyed by a fighter squadron off the Shetlands, another—a Heinkel flying-boat—off East Anglia. On January 11 a number of German aeroplanes crossed the British coast at half a dozen different points from Thanet to Aberdeen. They

drew our anti-aircraft gunfire—which was probably their intention—and made off. No harm befell the numerous and excited sightseers, although one woman had a narrow escape when a falling shrapnel bullet smashed her spectacles. On January 24 a few machines dropped four bombs on an unfrequented moor in the Shetlands, and a week later a bomber was shot down by the British fighters off the coast of Northumbria.

On February 4 German aircraft engaged in attacking shipping in the North Sea were themselves attacked and badly mauled. Three of our fighters drove a Heinkel inland and wrecked it a few miles from Whitby, killing or badly wounding all its occupants. Another was driven into the sea off the Tyne, and the survivors from yet a third victim were picked up by a British trawler. These all fell to a squadron of Hawker Hurricane fighters. A raider crashed near the Forth on February 9. Bad weather seems to have checked further raids and reconnaissances near the coast until February 23, when our Hurricanes destroyed a Heinkel, and the Spitfires of an auxiliary squadron chased a second Heinkel thirty miles and drove it down on land near St Abb's Head and Coldingham, where one of the earliest Northumbrian monasteries once stood and, if one of the early Welsh poems tells truth, King Arthur led a raid in the Dark Age.<sup>1</sup> The period closed with the destruction of two more Heinkels off the Firth of Forth and Northumberland, one of which was first blood to a fighter squadron, while the other was the second victim of the squadron named after and equipped by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

From the outbreak of war until March 2 thirty-eight enemy aircraft had been brought down on British soil or over home waters, and ten raiders had been forced to

<sup>1</sup> It was *Urbs Coludi*, in Bede's day. The poem entitled 'The Spoils of Hell' ('*Preiddan Annwfn*') tells how "only seven returned from *Caer Colud*."

land in neutral countries. Not a single British aeroplane had been shot down in these combats. During his visit to Scotland the King decorated Squadron-Leader Farquhar, who led the squadron that brought down the first enemy raider on British soil and destroyed others at North Berwick and St Abb's Head, receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for these exploits and for the "magnificent dash and courage" of his leadership.

While the fighter squadrons had thus distinguished themselves, fine work had been accomplished by the Coastal Command. If less spectacular, its work had been of enormous importance, for on it devolved many duties: reconnaissance at sea, protection of convoys (in which it did astonishingly well), supervision of the movements of shipping, and not least the search for submarines. Since the outbreak of war its machines had flown altogether three million miles, they had helped to convoy over 600 merchantmen, they had detected 102 submarines, and had attacked more than half of them. They continued to warn ships against mines, submarines and other dangers and to give all possible assistance to vessels in distress. Thus, when the S S *City of Marseilles* was mined off the east coast of Scotland in appallingly cold weather in early January and some of her boats capsized, the Coastal Command dispatched launches and motor-boats to the rescue and an aeroplane guided a lifeboat to the damaged liner, which was towed into port.

The Bomber Command of the R A F were heavily engaged on several occasions during this period. They attacked German warships near Helligoland on December 4. Two cruisers and a group of destroyers were attacked, hits were claimed and the raiders, in spite of heavy fire, returned safely. The Germans stated that only slight damage was done and that the only vessel sunk was a fishing-boat. The bombers encountered but

one German aeroplane, which they shot down. Two days later they reconnoitred the Friesian islands and Schleswig-Holstein, and after further reconnaissances they made a raid into the Bight of Heligoland. There one squadron of twelve machines, according to the German communiqué, encountered superior numbers of Messerschmitt fighters and a running engagement over the islands of Wangeroog and Spiekeroog followed. The enemy claimed to have shot more than half of them down. In point of fact, three did not return, while our pilots claimed to have shot down four of the enemy fighters in flames. The achievement was the more meritorious since the weather was bad during the flight into German waters and the British bombers came under heavy fire throughout the action from German warships. At this period mention was first made of security patrols provided by the Bomber Command, which cruised over the German seaplane bases at night with the object of interrupting the activities of mine-laying aircraft operating from these points. On December 18 there was another engagement over the Bight of Heligoland. A British formation looking for enemy warships encountered strong fighter forces. Seven British bombers were shot down and our men claimed to have disposed of twelve Messerschmitts. Two British crews were taken prisoner, and the Germans worked up the encounter into one of the greatest air fights yet recorded, in which 34<sup>1</sup> out of first 44, and then 52, British machines were defeated. They were welcome to their boasts, but it was asked whether the losses of British bombers assessed in terms of trained crews were not equal to those of the Germans and whether the policy of confining our aerial attacks to warships and seaplane bases did not multiply the difficulties of our Bombing Command.

<sup>1</sup> Less than 34 British aircraft were actually engaged

A small patrol of three bombers was attacked by a dozen Messerschmitt 110's early in January, about 80 miles north of Heligoland. Two of the three were lost. The pilot of the third, after shooting down one Messerschmitt in flames and disabling another, dropped to sea level and, dodging the enemy by skimming at 20 feet above the surface, was finally able to get clear of their pursuit.

A stronger patrol was engaged on January 9 with more Messerschmitts and lost one of its number. One of the enemy fell into the sea and another was forced to land on Danish soil. In this, as in previous actions, our bombers met the onslaught of their much faster opponents—Messerschmitt 110 is claimed to have a speed of 370 m p h—by keeping their formation, and thus meeting attacks with intensely heavy and concentrated broadsides from their machine-guns. Sylt seaplane base was raided on the following night and a number of bombs were dropped. After this there were no important encounters over the North Sea, but long-distance night flights were continued, and in the course of these expeditions, in which the cold was intense, the bombers reached Berlin (thrice in one week), Prague and Vienna. On one such occasion the wireless operator and air gunner of a bomber flying in a temperature of 30 degrees below zero continued to man his gun although in agonizing pain from frostbitten hands and feet while his machine was under very heavy fire from anti-aircraft guns, and in spite of injuries which were likely to lead to the partial loss of four fingers, he obtained wireless bearings that brought the aeroplane safely back to its base after a flight of five hours.

It will be observed that during this, as in the previous quarter, neither side attempted any mass bombing in the West. This was tried by the Russians in Finland, but

with very moderate success, against an intelligent, calm and courageous population, well drilled in precautionary measures and over a country where there were few important industrial areas. At the same time, the poor quality of the Russian machines and the lack of training of not a few of the Russian pilots deprived the experiment of the importance it might otherwise have had. The British bombers were largely used as long-range fighters and they acquitted themselves admirably owing to their excellent discipline and perfect co-operation against faster machines, often of greater fire power. In the first six months of the war the Allied aircraft had shown better technical qualities than German machines of the same class. They generally possessed higher speed and superior climbing performance and their equipment was better, and although it was not to be supposed that the Germans would fail to do their utmost to remedy their deficiencies, the numerous skirmishes of the period under review left British and French quietly confident.

Meanwhile the development of British and Dominion air strength was pursued as rapidly as possible. The Empire Air Training scheme was well under way by the New Year and on February 10 Sir Kingsley Wood, speaking at Bristol, described it as "one of the greatest efforts and one of the biggest demonstrations ever made of Empire power and unity." He stated on the same occasion that Canadian aircraft firms were being employed on a considerable scale in the production of aircraft of different types for the R A F, but there had also been a wide extension of the Group Organization established in Canada in 1938 and this combination had been entrusted with orders to the value of £6,000,000 to cover the production of aircraft of the latest type. At home, he added, many new aircraft factories would soon be coming into

production and many of those already existing had been extended. There was great activity in the construction of training aircraft and other types in Australia. The *Evening Standard* urged on several occasions that the policy of placing large orders for military aircraft in the United States should be reconsidered. It argued, not without reason, that the official designers of various kinds of fighting aircraft in Great Britain and France were better able to decide what types were required, thanks to their close touch with the pilots, gunners and mechanics who fought or tended the machines, than American firms, however enterprising, were likely to be. Nevertheless, the fact remained that to attain the rapid superiority in the air which offered the best hope of bringing the war to an earlier conclusion, we and our French allies had to fall back upon American producers.

Of new types which appeared in the German air force during this period, mention must be made of the Messerschmitt 110 which was used for fighting over the Bight and the German coast and subsequently appeared on the Western Front. It was a good machine which developed a speed of from 360 to 370 miles per hour, but in action it proved slightly inferior to the British Hurricanes and Spitfires. The Heinkel Bomber III K was repeatedly used over the North Sea and furnished a good proportion of the German casualties. The Junkers 88, a medium twin-engined bomber for land service, came into action at the end of the period but none had been captured before March 2.

The French brought a new and very good fighter, the Dewoitine 520, into service, and continued to get excellent results out of the Curtiss fighter, which, though inferior in performance to the best British and German machines, had the merit of being extremely easy to manoeuvre. As to the British Air Arm, Sir Kingsley

Wood, while avoiding details which might be useful to the enemy, stated a few days after March 2<sup>1</sup> that the top speed of the Spitfire had been increased by 10 per cent since its introduction to the service, that the new "long-nosed" Blenheim bomber showed a 50 per cent increase in range over the earlier model and was easier to navigate, and that there had been improvements in the armament of our aircraft. The last allusion referred to the substitution of light cannon, operated in turrets, in some of our aircraft for machine-guns. The light cannon had this advantage—that it lengthened the range of air-fighting and that its projectile could penetrate the patches of light armour carried by some of the German models. He estimated that the fighting strength of the Royal Air Force had been doubled in the last twelve months. It was a good performance, but to judge from the debate that followed it did not entirely satisfy the House of Commons, which had showed itself enthusiastically "air-minded" from the outbreak of war. Nevertheless, great feats had been accomplished and great advances made.

### 3 WAR ON THE SEAS AND COASTS IN NORTHERN WATERS

The second quarter opened on the Allied side with the intensification of the blockade and several heartening successes against German submarines. On the German side the campaign against merchantmen, Allied or neutral, was actively pressed by submarine attack, mine-laying, and later by air-bombing. Magnetic and contact mines were sown on the routes frequented by shipping, the former in shallow waters where alone their explosion could do damage. As usual, the hapless neutrals suffered relatively more heavily than the Allies. In the first week

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, March 7, 1940



of December mine and torpedo in the northern seas and the earlier depredations of the *Admiral Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean, news of which reached London more slowly, added about 60,000 tons to the casualty list. Among the larger neutral victims were Finnish, Greek and Norwegian vessels, the Dutch motor-liner *Tajandoen*, of over 8,000 tons, torpedoed in the Channel, and the Belgian *Ionic Shield*, wrecked with the *Tajandoen*'s survivors on board her off the coast of Devon, happily without loss of life. The heaviest blow was inflicted by a submarine which sank the Royal Mail S S *Navasota* during a raging gale in the Atlantic. Forty-three of her crew could not get clear of their foundering ship, and perished.

During these first days it was announced that three U-boats had been certainly destroyed—one off the Scottish coast, another in the Bristol Channel, the capture of their crews leaving no shadow of doubt of our success. The third U-boat was surprised by an aeroplane of our Coastal Command and was struck before it could dive. Other means of fighting down the U-boats were vigorously prosecuted in December and subsequently. The arming of merchantmen continued. Even fishing-smacks and other small craft received light weapons for use against submarines on the surface and aircraft. By mid-January over half the British merchant fleet had been armed and great numbers of gunners and gunlayers had been given training on shore. The laying of contact mines without notice on the high seas and of magnetic mines near the British coast compelled the Admiralty to lay a mine barrage off nearly the whole length of the East Coast from the Moray Firth to the Thames Estuary, leaving a space between the barrage and the coast for the use of shipping. An area in the Straits of Dover had already been protectively mined. Full notice was given to British

shipping and to neutral Governments. The barrage was intended to deter submarines from approaching the coast to attack shipping or to lay mines. No such barrage is submarine-proof, but the approach to waters thus protected is extremely dangerous, as the Four Years' War had proved. Contact mines were attacked by mine-sweeping flotillas, which dragged them to the surface and exploded them, and destroyed drifting or anchored mines showing on the surface with rifle or machine-gun fire. The discovery which deprived the magnetic mine of its mystery and its mastery of the shallows was described by Mr Churchill in Parliament as "a detective story written in a language of its own"<sup>1</sup>

It is now known that the enemy had used submarines to lay non-contact mines early in the war. In November he dropped them from aeroplanes with parachutes attached to lessen the shock of impact on the water. On the evening of November 22 one of these contrivances, instead of falling into a channel in the Thames estuary dropped on a sandbank at Shoeburyness. At 4.30 a.m. next morning a party of experts from H.M.S. *Vernon* under Lieutenant-Commander J. G. Ouvry arrived and, handling the mine very carefully, secured it so that it should not be rolled away by the tide, and took templates of the tools that would be required to take it to pieces. The tools were made in non-magnetic material and at 12.30 a.m. Lieutenant-Commander Ouvry began his dangerous task.

"He did it step by step," wrote the Naval Correspondent of *The Times*,<sup>2</sup> "informing the others, who remained at a safe distance, exactly what he was going to do at each operation in order that if anything he did should cause the mine to explode the next investigator should know of at least one operation to avoid." All

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Feb. 27, 1940, p. 1927

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, March 2, 1940

went well, and when the dissector had removed a detonator the party gathered round with a confidence that "was somewhat shaken" when a second detonator was found and had to be removed. But still all went well, and the dismembered engine of destruction was taken back to the *Vernon* for study. The whole mine weighs about three-quarters of a ton and has a 700 lb high explosive charge. It is made throughout of non-magnetic material—such as aluminium—and the firing device consists of a delicate magnetic needle, which when deflected by the magnetism of a ship's hull near-by completes an electric circuit and so fires the charge. There is a separate firing device—hence the two detonators found—which operates when the mine drops on something hard and solid, such as the deck of a ship."

Lieutenant-Commander Ouvry and his helpers were decorated by the King on December 19. One of them, Chief Petty-Officer Baldwin, was unfortunately killed by an explosion not long afterwards.

The defence against the magnetic mine was not made known until after March 2, but since many ships had already been supplied with it, including *Queen Mary*, it may properly be described here. The device was suggested by officers of the King's Navy and developed by them with the assistance of eminent scientists in less than three months from the discovery of the "secret weapon." It is known as the "de-gaussing girdle." Gauss, like Ohm, Ampère and Volta, was a famous physicist. He gave his name to the "unit of magnetic flux." The girdle that bears his name is constructed of "ordinary insulated electric cable, energized in a special way by an electric current."<sup>1</sup> It neutralizes the natural magnetic field of an iron or steel ship. It is applicable to ships of all dimensions, and the Naval Correspondent of

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 9

*The Times* wrote on March 9 that no ship fitted with it had been damaged by a magnetic mine

The third stage in the German campaign of frightfulness at sea began shortly before Christmas. On December 17 German aircraft attacked what the enemy described as "British outpost units". On that and the next two days they attacked 35 vessels, two of them neutrals. Their attacks on three naval units failed. They sank a small coaster and six fishing-trawlers with bombs and machine-gun fire. This was a rehearsal. On January 9 they attacked again, sinking two British and damaging two Danish vessels and attacking a Trinity House ship which was relieving lightship crews. Of the forty men aboard her, thirty-two were wounded, some fatally, by machine-gun fire and bomb splinters. On the same day the S S *Upminster* was attacked by two aeroplanes, which bombed and machine-gunned her mercilessly, killing her master and two men and firing at the crew while they were trying to get the boats out. The enemy's bombing efficiency was patchy, and its accuracy seems to have varied directly with his expectation of interference from the fighters of the British Coastal Command.

In the attack on the S S *Northgrove* by two aircraft, the master of the ship counted forty bombs "dropped with more haste than accuracy". The next big offensive against shipping came on January 29. It extended from the coast of Kent to the Shetlands, no less than thirteen ships were attacked, including two defenceless lightships, and it was repeated on the following day. The attacks were made in cloudy weather which aided the escape of the raiders from the British fighters that pursued them. The Germans were as brutal as usual. The only survivor of the crew of the East Dudgeon Light Vessel told how the attackers, after spraying the ship with machine-gun

fire, dropped nine bombs, the last of which wrecked the ship, and how his seven companions were drowned while attempting to reach the coast in rough and wintry weather. Neutrals were attacked in these operations, the Latvian *Tautmila* losing a third of her crew.

Later raids proved more expensive to the raiders, but losses did not prevent the German inspired Press from publishing the most exaggerated claims of sinkings by mine, air attack and submarine, nor from indulging in the most strident boasts of their naval "command" of the North Sea, now become the "Sea of Death." Much of this vaunting was addressed to northern neutrals, who were told that if they would trade with the British and French they must take the same risks. Other nations learnt that these raids were part of a great plan to wear down British naval strength by guerilla warfare, or else that they were rehearsals for aerial offensive combined with a submarine attack, both on a larger scale than had yet been seen in the war, upon British shipping and British ports. The British Mercantile Marine, orderly convoyed, pursued its lawful occasions unpenalized, almost unimpeded, while the sea was becoming more and more a Todesraum for unconvoyed neutral shipping.

It was part of the German plan to discourage neutral ship-owners from taking advantage of British and French offers of convoy, and hints given by German diplomatists to neutral Governments bore a similar import. Ships that accepted such offers would be regarded as having lost their neutrality by accepting belligerent protection, in fact the shipowners of the smaller maritime states had to choose, when choice was open to them, between accepting British or French convoy and being black-listed by the German Naval Intelligence or taking their risks unconvoyed. The head and front of their offending was that they allowed their ships to visit British or French

ports at all. As the event proved, convoyed ships ran much less risk. Up to February 19 nearly 9,000 ships had been convoyed by British warships. Of these only 19 had been lost, and the Naval Correspondent of *The Times* pointed out that the odds against sinking of convoyed vessels were 472 to 1. Till then only two neutral ships had been sunk when in convoy, one by a mine. The principal German success against a convoy was also due to a mine, which sank the outward-bound liner *Dunbar Castle* off the South-East Coast of England on January 8, killing her captain and several of her crew.<sup>1</sup>

Of the attacks on neutrals and belligerent shipping, most were naturally made in the North Sea, but submarines were also operating in the Atlantic, one of which laid mines in the Irish Sea and sank the motor packet vessel *Munster Castle* between Belfast and Liverpool on February 7. Others sank ships off the Spanish coast and near the western entrance to the Channel, and the *Beaverburn*, one of the fastest types of cargo vessels, was sunk off the south-west coast of England. Another sinking caused great indignation in Holland. The *Burgerdyk*, a Holland-America liner, was stopped by a U-boat off the Bishop Rock while on her way from New York to Rotterdam with a cargo of grain consigned to a Dutch firm. The German captain, nevertheless, informed her first mate (who had gone on board the submarine with her papers) that he would sink her because she had zigzagged, which the mate denied, because she had wirelessed her position to Land's End, which was untrue, and because she was going to the Downs, which the Dutch-

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, February 21

<sup>2</sup> None of her 48 passengers appears to have been lost, although the ship was badly damaged by the explosion, and went down in twenty minutes.

man admitted that she might be forced to do by the British Naval Control. This wolf and lamb colloquy ended in the German ordering the *Burgerdyk's* captain to wireless to Land's End announcing that his ship was sinking owing to a collision and to get his passengers and crew into the boats within half an hour. This was done and the U-boat then torpedoed the liner. The boats were picked up some fifteen hours later. The Dutch Government demanded an indemnity and the punishment of the officer responsible. An apparently inspired statement published by the German Official News Agency thereupon declared that if a neutral ship was *en route* to a British control harbour, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, her cargo was liable to be regarded as contraband and the ship treated accordingly. This statement rejected foreign protests about the torpedoing of the *Burgerdyk* and accused the neutral Press of a breach of neutrality in criticizing the German action. This was not the only case of attack on neutral voyaging between neutral ports, indeed, German breaches of the recognized laws of maritime war were far more frequent than their observance. The torpedoing of Allied and neutral ships without warning, the bombing of merchantmen, the sinking of ships in conditions of weather and temperature that made the escape of their crews by boat problematical, were reported almost daily. Official Germany, however, exulted over these excesses. On January 11 all the German newspapers published an account by a German airman of the attack on the small Danish merchantmen, *Feddy* and *Ivan Kondrup*, which contained the engaging passage "At the second attempt one of our bombs fell just in front of her bows. Behind us is our leader. His bombs hit the ship right amidships. The boiler is exploding. We embraced each other, trembling with joy." The last, and one of the worst German

exploits in this quarter was the bombing of the S S *Domala*, which was conveying 143 British Indians (mostly sailors detained at the outbreak of war who had just been released by the German Government) from Antwerp 110 people were killed, drowned, or died from the effects of shock and exposure, and a Dutch steamer which afterwards rescued 50 of the survivors was herself attacked by the same aeroplane

Yet in spite of these brutalities and boastings, the Allied losses of merchant shipping fell far short of German estimates and expectations Thus, on February 9 the Admiralty, in reply to a German claim to have destroyed nearly 1,500,000 tons of Allied and neutral shipping, gave the total British loss until that date at just over 500,000 tons The French had lost only 62,000 tons The losses of the unfortunate neutrals had amounted to close on 350,000 tons, and this figure had been much exceeded by March 2 New construction, captures of merchantmen, and purchases abroad reduced the net British loss to 134,000 tons, i e, less than one per cent The captures, in which the French played an important part, were mostly made in the Atlantic German ships in South American, Iberian and neutral West Indian harbours had put to sea in an attempt to pass round the flank of the British blockade and reach Germany by hugging the Norwegian coast Several were wrecked. Some were scuttled when British or French warships appeared Others were made prizes At the end of February the enemy had lost, by capture, 25 merchantmen, displacing altogether nearly 100,000 tons, and 28 by scuttling, representing nearly 153,000 tons, besides others that were wrecked on the Norwegian and Icelandic coasts Hardly any reached a German port

British naval operations during this period were confined in northern waters to patrol, control, anti-submarine



measures, convoy, and attacks by submarines on German warships. In December the flagship *Nelson* and the *Barham*, a veteran of Jutland, were damaged, the first by a magnetic mine, the second by a torpedo fired by a U-boat, but both returned to port under their own steam and were repaired. It was a trying period for British destroyers. *Exmouth*, *Grenville*, *Daring* and *Duchess* were sunk, the first three by mine or torpedo, the last by collision, with a total loss of over 500 lives. Another, H M S *Jersey*, was damaged. Several Admiralty trawlers went down, some destroyed with all hands by mine, others leaving a few survivors. Another victim was H M's sloop *Sphinx*, which had been damaged by an enemy air attack, and capsized while being towed into port in stormy weather, with the loss of 54 lives. In the second week of January three of our submarines, *Undine*, *Starfish* and *Seahorse*, were destroyed by the enemy while engaged in hazardous service on the German coast. They seem to have been entangled in German nets and rammed when they struggled to the surface. The Germans announced that they held thirty survivors from *Undine* and *Starfish*.

British submarines, nevertheless, had two conspicuous triumphs. On December 10 the *Bremen*, which had escaped to Murmansk in Russian Lapland from New York, returned to German waters. She was sighted by the British submarine *Salmon* off the Norwegian coast, but the submarine did not follow German precedent by attacking the unarmed liner without warning. The Germans sneered at our abstention from torpedoing their great liner. Their sneers were silenced a few days later. Lieutenant-Commander Bickford, after destroying a U-boat, sighted several large German warships, and helped by their unexpected change of formation, fired a salvo of six torpedoes. He heard one get home on the light cruiser *Leipzig* and heard two heavy detonations

after the *Salmon* had dived. It appears that one German 10,000 ton cruiser at least was hit. The enemy admitted later that the *Blucher* had been damaged, and the circumstance that the name of the pocket-battleship *Deutschland* was afterwards changed to *Lutzow* suggested that the large cruiser of that name might have gone down. On December 14 another blow was struck. H M S *Ursula* (Lieutenant-Commander Phillips), a submarine of the *Undine* class, penetrated a screen of six German destroyers, torpedoed a light cruiser of the *Koln* class and eluded the enemy's counter attacks in the shallow waters of the Elbe mouth. Officers and men of both these submarines received promotions or decorations for their brilliant work.

Meanwhile the British and French Admiralties pressed their campaign against the U-boats, now and again lifting the curtain that hid most of their successes, to reveal some striking triumph. On December 27 it was announced that the French sloop *Commandant Duboc*, working in combination with a British coastal aeroplane, had sunk one of the pests and that *Sirocco*, co-operating with *La Railleuse* and a French aeroplane, had added a third victim to her list. On February 10 the British Admiralty announced that two submarines had been sunk by the same destroyer while attacking a convoy, and on February 14 two U-boats concerned in the destruction of three large British merchant ships of a total displacement of over 30,000 tons, had been sunk, one of them only half an hour after she had sunk the S S *Sultan Star*. In February the French *Simoun*, *Sirocco's* sister, drove a submarine to the surface with depth charges off Cape Finisterre and finished her career with the ram. By the end of February there was good reason to believe that well over thirty U-boats had been disposed of. There was no confirmation of the

striking acceleration of submarine construction which the Nazi Press had threatened, and the belief that the Allies had the measure of the U-boats was strengthened by their experience throughout this period of the war

On February 19 Britain was delighted, Norway troubled, Germany infuriated, and many neutral countries pleasantly thrilled, by the news of the rescue of 299 British prisoners from the German auxiliary cruiser *Altmark*. This vessel had served as a tender to the *Admiral Graf von Spee* during her cruise in the South Atlantic and as a prison ship for most of the captives from seven merchantmen for which the pocket-battleship had accounted. It was known that they had been subjected to stern treatment on board the *Altmark* and it was expected that the German would try to reach Norwegian waters and use the "covered way" down the Norwegian coast to reach a friendly port. In spite of the Navy's vigilance, she eluded British observation until February 15, when she was sighted, identified by aircraft, and intercepted by H M S destroyer *Intrepid*<sup>1</sup>. She promptly turned into the Josing Fjord in Norwegian territorial waters. At about the same time it became known that she had put in to the Norwegian port of Bergen and had been allowed to leave harbour without liberating her prisoners.

The British ships were ordered to search the *Altmark*, in spite of her being in Norwegian waters, and to recover the prisoners. The flotilla leader *Cossack* (Captain Vian) carried out the operation. At the mouth of the fjord she met two Norwegian gunboats. Her captain laid the case for the search of *Altmark* before the Norwegian commander, who replied that *Altmark* was an unarmed merchantman, that he knew nothing of the alleged prisoners, and that she had been examined at

<sup>1</sup> She had already passed through some 500 miles of Norwegian territorial water, and had put into Bergen.

Bergen Captain Vian took his ship out of the fjord and communicated with the Admiralty After dark he steamed in again and requested that *Altmark* should be taken under British escort to Bergen with a joint Anglo-Norwegian guard on board and there examined The Norwegian officer refused on the ground of his Government's instructions and assured Captain Vian there were no prisoners on board the German Captain Vian invited him to test his assurance by accompanying a British boarding-party on board *Altmark* and witnessing a search He agreed, and went on board H M S *Cossack* At this point *Altmark*, which was jammed in pack-ice at the landward end of the fjord, started her engines and attempted to ram the British destroyer *Cossack* evaded the blow, and the *Altmark* grounded by the stern *Cossack* grappled with her, and boarders swarmed on to the German Firing broke out, and one of the British boarding-party was severely wounded While the Norwegian officer returned to his ship on the ground that he had not come to witness a fight, the boarders thrust the German captain from the bridge, and searched the ship, to find prisoners locked up in store rooms, shell rooms, and even in an empty oil tank, and right glad to hear their rescuers' "Navy here!" The armed guard from the *Graf von Spee* had made their way on shore, and were firing at the British, who replied, and fired upon Germans who were apparently trying to join them from the ship Several Germans were killed in the fight One fell into the icy water between two floes, and was rescued by two of *Cossack's* officers, who dived in after him Two pom-poms and four machine-guns were found on board *Altmark* in disproof of the Norwegian story The rescued prisoners were put on board *Cossack* She steamed out of the fjord, and next day all England rang with the news

The Norwegian Government were anxious and indignant. Their case was morally weak and legally doubtful. They submitted that *Altmark* was a warship, and therefore entitled to refuse to be searched by the Norwegian authorities. They emphasized the violation of their country's neutrality. But they appeared to overlook the fact that if the *Altmark* was a warship—and she was armed, had been serving as an auxiliary war vessel figured on the German Navy list, and had sailors of the German Navy on board—she could not well claim that she was engaged in what the international jurists call “an innocent voyage,” which presumably means the sort of voyage a warship would make in waters belonging to another nation in time of peace. The fact that the *Altmark* had followed the sinuosities of the Norwegian coast most carefully for hundreds of miles and carried so many prisoners of war, deprived her voyage of the “innocence” which alone would have authorized her to remain more than twenty-four hours in neutral waters. The Norwegian Government were left with a grievance against the British, and equally against the German Government, to whom they refused reparation on the ground that the *Altmark's* captain had deceived them. The British Government, on the other hand, expressed the conviction that the examination of the *Altmark* at Bergen had been hardly even perfunctory—(else how had the shouts of the prisoners not been heard?) and that the Norwegians had failed to fulfil their duty as neutrals. In Britain the rescue aroused the utmost enthusiasm. The released prisoners, who had had abundant cause for complaint, were fêted, the Prime Minister, in Parliament, won the applause of both sides of the House by his vigorous presentation of the British case. He pointed out that naval action was only taken against the *Altmark* when the Norwegian

authorities had repeatedly refused a proper investigation, that the views of Professor Koht, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, on international law would legalize the abuse of neutrality by German warships, and that the Norwegians' indifference was inconsistent with their neutral obligations towards this country as a belligerent. In most neutral countries the action of the *Cossack's* captain was regarded with sympathy, not least in America, where this "page out of Marryat" was much admired. The German people were worked up into a factitious fury by a Press that described the affair as an example of the murderous and piratical habits of the British. Their wrath cheered the British public, who regarded the rescue as a very agreeable pendant to the Battle of the River Plate, shortly to be described.

The boarding of the *Altmark* and the release of the British seamen imprisoned in her had diplomatic repercussions, which raised an international controversy as to the meaning of "neutrality." On February 17 the British Government made a communication to the Norwegian Government in which they accused Norway of failing in her duty as a neutral, and urged that the *Altmark* should be interned. "The record of this ship must have been well known to the Norwegian Government, and in the view of H M Government it was incumbent on the Norwegian authorities, when she entered Bergen and requested passage through Norwegian territorial waters, to subject her to a most careful search." At the same time, the Norwegian Government made a protest in London against what they considered a "gross violation of territorial waters" by the destroyer *Cossack*, and they demanded the return of the rescued Britons and the payment of damages. In the course of a statement in the Storting, the Foreign Minister, Prof Koht, disclosed that the *Altmark* had not, as the British

supposed, been searched at Bergen, they "did not know that British prisoners were on board," but in any case, the *Altmark* "had the right to pass through Norwegian territorial waters, and there was nothing in international law prohibiting a belligerent from conveying prisoners through neutral territory if the passage itself was legal."

On the same day the German Minister in Oslo transmitted to the Norwegian Government the "sharpest protest against the unheard-of violation of international law in Norwegian coastal waters, and against the fact that the Norwegian Government did not grant sufficient protection for our ship *Altmark*." He further declared "I must draw your attention to the fact that we regard the situation as being the most serious possible—a situation which may have the gravest consequences."

On February 20 Mr Chamberlain, speaking in the House, described the rescue of the British prisoners as an "admirably conducted operation," and protested against the Norwegian Government's failure to see anything objectionable in the use of Norwegian territorial waters for hundreds of miles by a German warship for the purpose of escaping capture on the high seas, and of conveying British prisoners to a German prison camp. Such a doctrine is at variance with international law as His Majesty's Government understand it." On the same day Prof Koht drew attention to a British Government statement of May 23, 1939, which read "While H M Government do not deny that there may, in special circumstances, be a right to refuse to belligerent warships entry into neutral territorial waters, they have always maintained, and must continue to maintain, the existence of such a right of entry for the purpose of innocent passage, and they are not aware of any case in which it has been refused by neutrals to belligerents for this purpose." The Norwegian Foreign Minister claimed that "works by

British experts on international law emphasize that the presence of prisoners in a warship makes no difference, and does not prevent the ship from enjoying the right of free passage”

The incident and the subsequent controversy were keenly discussed in the Press of every country in the world. Norwegian newspapers, while insisting on the illegality of the British action, and expressing hurt surprise at the “unfair” tone of British statesmen and journalists were, generally speaking, remarkably anxious to present the British case in a good light. A weekly journal, *Farmand*, urged that more emphasis should be given to the human aspect of the affair. “It was merely an unfortunate incident, and was of quite a different kind from the offences committed by Germany in sinking ships without warning.” Russian, Italian, and particularly Spanish comment was unfavourable to the British. Elsewhere in Europe the British action was frequently condoned on humanitarian grounds, and the United States Press was markedly pro-British.

As for opinion in Britain itself. Mr Harold Nicolson<sup>1</sup> held the view that “Neither our Ministers nor our Press as a whole did anything like justice to the Norwegian case.” He was among those who considered that “in boarding the *Altmark* we were committing a flagrant violation of international law,” but who felt that “in the circumstances our action was necessary” sentiments which the author must confess to sharing—so long as such jurists bear in mind that, beside German crimes against neutrals at sea, our offence was as trespassing or, at worst, poaching, in a straggling, ill-guarded estate, compared with murder. He would further deprecate the unfair and misleading Press descriptions of the *Altmark*, such as the “tortures endured on the living hell of the

<sup>1</sup> In *The Spectator*, March 1, 1940, p. 283



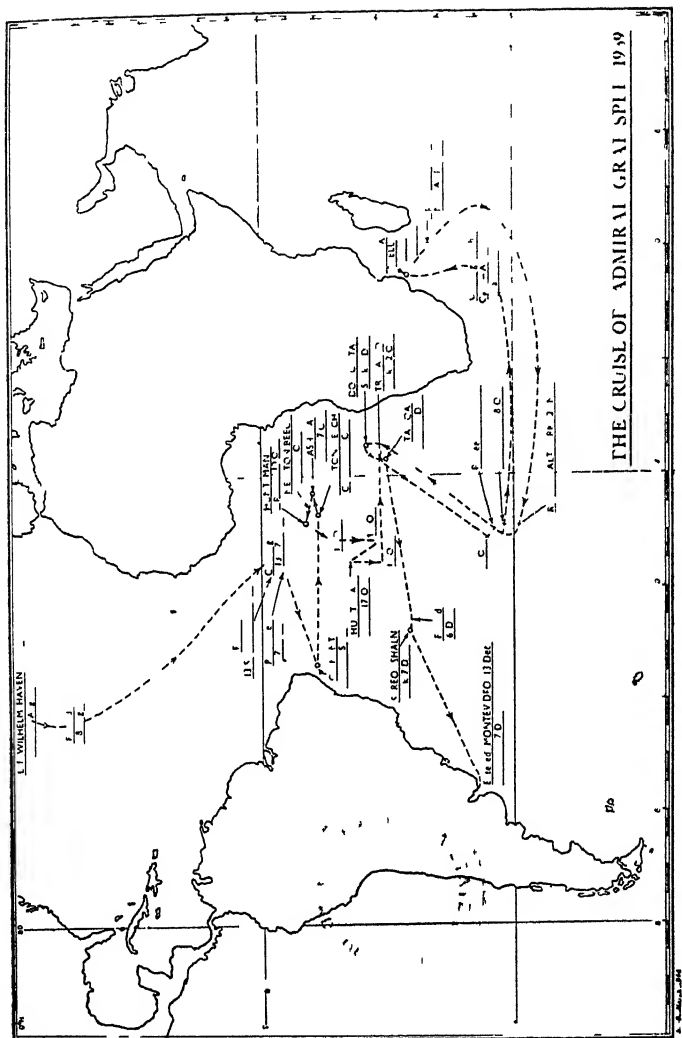
'slaveship' " These accounts were not only at direct variance with the truth, but were publicly contradicted by the British captives themselves. These were, on the whole, not badly treated by the German crew, though the officers were martinets, and the captain appears to have been a disagreeable tyrant—"a regular Nazi"—to British and Germans alike. The British enjoyed—or anyhow consumed—the same rations as their captors, who would sometimes jostle them in order to slip cigarettes into their hands unperceived. Nor should it be forgotten that, where prisoners outnumbered gaolers more than two to one, it would have showed a low degree of intelligence to allow them all above decks at the same moment, also that the British practice of cutting out portions of the ship's furniture to carve chessmen could hardly be expected to commend itself to the authorities. It is discreditable and impolitic as well as unjust to invent atrocities, particularly when so wide and varied a field of horror is available wherever Nazism has penetrated by land, sea, or air. More interesting and significant was the fact that several of the German crew afterwards stated that they had jumped overboard because they had been informed at home that the British tortured their prisoners.

#### 4 THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

At 6 a.m. on the morning of December 13 the *Admiral Graf von Spee* was sighted and engaged by the South American Division of the America Station. The German pocket battleship, after sinking the merchantmen *Africa*, *Shell* and *Mapia* off the southern entrance to the Mozambique Channel, had doubled back into the South Atlantic. On December 3 it became known that a "raider" had sunk the Blue Star liner *Doric Star* on her way home from

New Zealand and Australia This was, no doubt, one of the reasons which had induced Commodore H H Harwood, who commanded the South America Division, to search for the German ship off the estuary of the River Plate, the entrance to Montevideo and Buenos Aires The German freighter *Tacoma*, which was believed to be the raider's supply ship, was in Montevideo harbour In Buenos Aires were several German vessels, and fuel could be obtained at either port In spite of her large fuel capacity, the German "pocket battleship" must have a limit to her radius of action, and one of the above ports was the nearest neutral harbour where she could obtain fuel

On paper, Commodore Harwood's force of three cruisers was much inferior in gun-power, not to mention protection, to the German pocket battleship He was flying his broad pennant in the cruiser *Ajax* (Captain C H L Woodhouse), a 7,000-ton ship carrying eight 6-in guns Her sister, H M S *Achilles* (Captain W B Parry), was of the same type She had been a unit of the New Zealand Division before the war With them was H M S *Exeter* (Captain F S Bell), a lightly armoured cruiser which had been the commodore's flagship before the outbreak of war when she was recommissioning in a West Country port She carried six 8-in guns The combined weight of the broadsides of the three British ships was 3,136 lb The German carried six 11-in guns, all of which could fire on either beam, and eight 5 9-in. quick-firers, four on each beam, which gave her a broadside of 4,708 lb In theory, the German should have been able to overpower her lightly armed opponents in detail The British commodore, however, had trained his squadron to perfection The captains and staffs of all three ships had been well prepared for the tactics that he employed, and their crews were full of confidence



THE CRUISE OF ADMIRAL GRIF SPLT, 1930

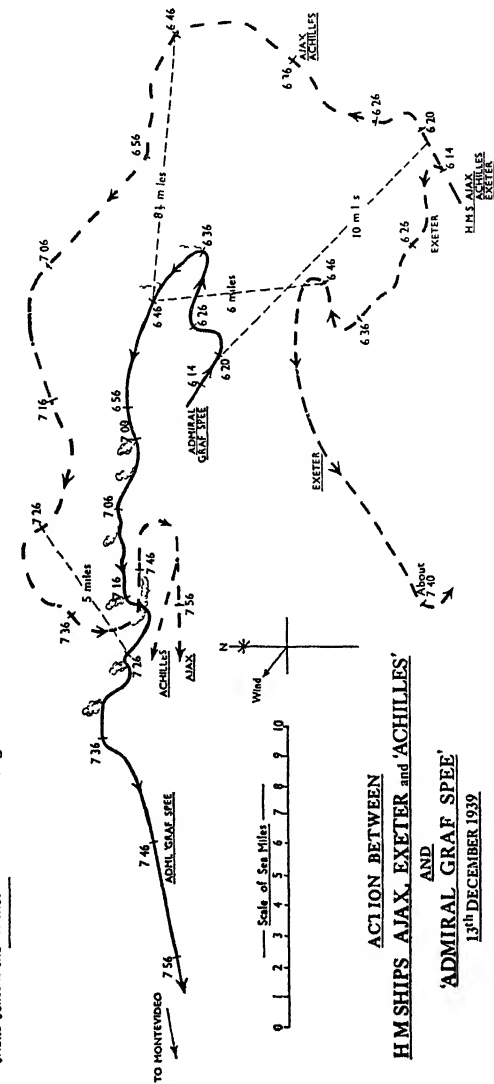
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TRACK OF ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE

HMS AJAX and ACHILLES

HMS EXETER

SHORE SCREENS SHOWN THUS



ACTION BETWEEN  
HMS SHIPS AJAX, EXETER and 'ACHILLES'

AND

'ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE'

13th DECEMBER 1939

ACTION BETWEEN H M SHIPS 471A, EXETER AND ACHILLES, AND ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE

At the time when these lines were written no official dispatch concerning the ensuing action had been published. The best account of it that has been made public reached England from "a Colonial Governor" Captain Langsdorff, who commanded the German ship, also described it to the port authorities at Montevideo. On January 4 a Reuter message from Montevideo gave the British commander's brief story of the engagement. The following narrative is an attempt to combine the three stories of an encounter which will rank high in the glorious history of the King's Navy.

December 13 dawned brightly, and visibility was perfect. The German quickly spotted the high mast of H M S *Exeter*, apparently on his starboard beam off the Brazilian coast. He had been unable to make contact with a supply ship from Montevideo, he was sorely in need of fuel, and he turned south only to find the *Ajax* and *Achilles*, manœuvring to force him towards the Uruguayan coast. He therefore decided to engage the cruiser *Exeter*, which was nearest him and steaming on a converging course.

At 6 18 a.m. the German opened fire upon the *Exeter* with three of his heavy guns at ten miles. The first salvo fell short, the second fell directly astern, the third and fourth missed, but the fifth scored a hit and the seventh a direct hit. A shell hit the forward 8-in. gun turret, and killed eight out of its crew of fifteen marines, besides causing several casualties on the bridge above it. A man was killed on each side of Captain Bell, who remained unhurt. The *Exeter* continued to close, receiving several more hits, and presently coming under the fire of the enemy's 5 9-in. guns. She returned shot for shot, but sustained heavy punishment. Her upper works were badly damaged by splinters from shells which burst on the water alongside her. Just after 7 a.m. her steering-

gear was badly damaged, and for forty-five minutes her captain conned his ship from the after control, just forward of the mainmast, using a boat's compass. A chain of ten sailors passed orders from man to man to the after steering-wheel and the engine-room. Many fires broke out on board, where devoted men kept them under by flinging the burning material into the sea, and, below decks, where the outbreaks were more numerous, by the staunchness of the fire parties. Officers and men behaved magnificently. "The labours of the engine-room staff were beyond praise. Two hours are required normally to work up to full speed, but the impossible was achieved in twenty minutes."<sup>1</sup> At 7.40 a.m. the *Exeter* was no longer serviceable, and fell out of action. Only one 8-in. gun could be fired, and that had to be worked by hand. Five officers and fifty-six of her crew had been killed, three officers and twenty other ranks had been wounded, some mortally. But she had left her mark on the *Admiral Graf von Spee*, and her magnificent resistance had been of the greatest help to the *Ajax* and *Achilles*, which had come into action soon after the *Exeter*.

These two 6-in.-gun cruisers had no serious protection against the heavy metal of the German, and their broad-side fire was not to be compared with his. But they shot admirably.

On January 3 the British commander who put into Montevideo on board his flagship, gave the following account of this stage of the action.

"We must have damaged the *Graf Spee* seriously, as after sixteen minutes' firing she emitted a smoke screen and went towards the Plate at full speed. We closed. She zigzagged, and continued throwing out smoke screens. The *Exeter* gradually dropped astern, but was still firing.

The *Ajax* and *Achilles* closed in to four miles, frequently

<sup>1</sup> Governor's Narrative

hitting the *Graf Spee*. We saw fires break out on board her. The *Ajax* had two turrets out of action, and the *Achilles* was also damaged, but both continued fighting. After eighty minutes or so we broke off the action, and went to a long range with the purpose of shadowing the *Graf Spee* everywhere. The *Graf Spee* continued towards the Plate, occasionally firing when we got too close.

"So it went on all day. In the evening the *Graf Spee* was well within the Plate waters. At 9.10 p.m. the *Graf Spee* turned, suddenly firing three salvos at the *Achilles*, but not hitting her. She fired three salvos twenty minutes later, but then it was quite dark, and there was no hit. The *Achilles* followed the *Graf Spee* until she saw her anchor at Montevideo."<sup>1</sup>

So ended a brilliant action. The combined losses of the *Ajax* and *Achilles* amounted to eleven killed and fourteen wounded, most of them slightly. Next day they were joined by the cruiser *Cumberland*. The *Exeter* left for the Falklands to repair damages and land her most severely wounded. The German battleship had suffered heavily. Thirty-six of her officers and crew had been killed, and sixty wounded. According to the well-informed correspondent of *The Times* at Montevideo<sup>2</sup> two of her forward 11-in. guns were out of action, and one of her starboard 5.9-in. pieces, several of her torpedo tubes had been wrecked by splinters, her control tower had been so damaged that her range-finding was inaccurate, and she had only twenty-eight rounds of heavy shell left. Captain Langsdorff admitted that the fire of the British cruisers had wrecked the control tower, and he added that their shells had pierced the 4-in. armour of her belt forward.

The battleship could have continued the engagement, but it is possible that the orders given her to avoid action with, and observation by, the British

<sup>1</sup> Published by Reuter's Agency, January 4.

<sup>2</sup> December 21.

Fleet had created an escapist mentality on board

The only criticism of the young German sailors made by British prisoners in the German ship was that they seemed to lack physical stamina owing, perhaps, to insufficient rations. These captives had been well treated by Captain Langsdorff and his officers. They were confined in a compartment under an 11-in gun turret, but suffered no injury, and when they were put ashore next day they parted from their captor in a friendly spirit. An attempt of the German Minister to Uruguay to ascribe the British success to the use of mustard gas broke down after medical examination of the wounded. The released prisoners stated that the remainder of the crews taken off the sunk merchantmen were on board a tanker, the *Altmark*, where they themselves had been. They had no good to say of their treatment in that ship.

On the morning of December 14 the British Minister to Uruguay requested the Government of the Republic to allow the *Admiral Graf von Spee* no more than twenty-four hours in port. His request was based upon Article XII of the Hague Convention of 1907, which forbids belligerent warships, in the absence of any special provision to the contrary in the legislation of a neutral Power, to remain for more than twenty-four hours in the territorial waters of that Power. He also invoked Article XIII of the Convention, whereby a neutral must call upon a belligerent warship to leave its waters within twenty-four hours, and the ruling of the Havana Convention of 1928, to which many of the governments of the New World had adhered, as to the interpretation of Article XIV of the Convention. This Article forbade a belligerent warship to prolong its stay in neutral waters for more than twenty-four hours, except on account of stress of weather or damage. The Havana Convention



had ruled that the term "damage" did not apply to injuries received in battle or through enemy action

On the following afternoon Mr Millington-Drake renewed his request. By this time the Uruguayan Government, having studied the case, and having taken the advice of their experts, who had visited the German ship, although they had not presented their final report, were ready with a provisional decision. They ruled that the *Admiral Graf von Spee* should be allowed to remain in port and effect the repairs required to make her seaworthy for not more than forty-eight hours. They based this decision on the ground that they had previously given permission to British belligerent warships to remain in their waters to make good damage caused by stormy weather for over twenty-four hours. On receiving their assessors' report, they gave the German another twenty-four hours<sup>1</sup>. The German Government, however, pressed for more time,

<sup>1</sup> The Uruguayan Blue Book, published in English (Hutchinson & Co., Ltd.), with the authority of the Government of the Republic, contains an interesting passage showing the extent of the damage done to the *Admiral Graf von Spee* during the action. The Technical Commission of the Port Authorities visited the *Graf von Spee* on December 14, 1939, and received a report from her captain. He summarized the 'damage affecting the seaworthiness of the ship' as nine holes in the hull, two of them of large size, a reduction in the efficiency of the fire-fighting equipment, cracks in the stern, damage to essential equipment in the galley, bakery, and laundry, repairs required to the auxiliary boiler of the fresh-water plant. The Commission did not go below the armoured deck or enter the conning-tower, or (apparently) the turrets. They reported that there were not nine, but twenty-seven holes in the hull of the ship, fifteen on the starboard, and twelve on the port side, and that the damage to the fire-fighting equipment could not be deemed as affecting seaworthiness, they observed no cracks in the stern. As far as the galley, bakery, etc., were concerned, one cooking cauldron, pipes, and electrical equipment were damaged by a shell. When they enquired with regard to the machinery of the auxiliary boiler of the fresh-water plant, Captain Langsdorff informed them that it was situated under the armoured deck, and was not damaged. The result of their investigation was that provisional repairs could be carried out in three days.

but in vain Dr Guan, the Uruguayan Foreign Minister, informed the German Minister that the German battleship must leave by 8 p m on Sunday, December 17

Meanwhile, the Germans had begun to repair their damaged ship under difficulties On December 14 she took on board steel plates and oxygen for welding, but none of the three ship-repairing firms at Montevideo would give any assistance Two were British owned The owner of the third was an Uruguayan of French descent and sympathies The Germans were consequently obliged to send to Buenos Aires for assistance It does not appear to have reached them until late on December 15, when a number of craftsmen employed by a German-Argentine firm and several tugs and launches arrived All through the next day the crew and their expert assistants were hard at work repairing the wrecked control tower and anti-aircraft batteries, and patching up the shell holes and splinter wounds in her sides Twice during the day she might have risked a sortie, once during a morning fog, and again in the afternoon, when heavy rain restricted vision to a few hundred yards But no order had reached Captain Langsdorff from Berlin, or the ship was not yet in condition to risk action

And the Germans did not wish to risk an action On Saturday, Herr Otto Langman, the German Minister, and Captain Langsdorff paid another visit to the Uruguayan Foreign Minister They informed him that the *Admiral Graf von Spee* would not be seaworthy on Sunday, and demanded a stay of fifteen days in Uruguayan waters Dr Guan offered to consider the proposal provided that the German Government accepted the Uruguayan decision without question But the Germans did not consent to his condition, and the Uruguayan





Government's time limit held good. It is believed that Captain Langsdorff threatened to blow up his ship in sight of Montevideo if a longer stay were not permitted, but this did not avail him. After the interview the Uruguayan Foreign Minister was instructed by his Government to demand that the German pocket battleship should leave Montevideo at the stated time or be interned. Berlin replied with a flat refusal.

Señor Guan had another shot in his locker. On Sunday, the last day allowed, the representatives of eleven American Republics, including the United States, met him at the Foreign Ministry. They agreed to support the Uruguayan demand, and it is possible that news of their decision reached Berlin. It certainly was made known to the German Minister. While the Ministers met, the *Admiral Graf von Spee* weighed one of her anchors, transferred the repairing tackle to an attendant tug, and landed twenty-one wounded, who were sent to hospital in the city. A number of her crew went on board the tanker *Tacoma*. As the sun went down smoke began to issue from her funnels. At 6.35 p.m. she moved slowly out of port in the wake of the harbour-master's tug. The *Tacoma* followed her example ten minutes later. A number of tugs and launches escorted her eastwards. When she passed out of sight of the watchers at Montevideo she was steering a course towards the south-east, and was flying the Swastika main and aft. It became known that the men transferred to the *Tacoma* had brought their personal effects with them, and it was clear that there would be no battle.

Shortly after 6.40 p.m. the German turned westward into the channel leading to Buenos Aires. She stopped her engines. The *Tacoma* closed up, the tugs and launches gathered round and took off her crew. Her captain and a few men left on board her set bombs in her magazines.

and, this done, went over the side. Five minutes before the time limit the flames of the first explosion shot up against the setting sun. More explosions followed, and the ship settled down stern first in some twenty-five feet of water, the swastika still flying from her mainmast and stern, her funnels and a great part of her superstructure showing from time to time through the burst of flame and smoke that belched up from below. Her captain and crew departed in tugs and on board the *Tacoma* to Buenos Aires.

At Montevideo the German-Uruguayan wrangle continued. An hour after the scuttling of the battleship the German Minister protested to Dr. Guanú that the Uruguayan Government had not followed a strict policy of neutrality and proceeded to publish a letter from Captain Langsdorff. In this he complained that the decision was a contravention of the Hague Convention, that his ship was unseaworthy since insufficient time had been allowed for repairs, the destruction of the cook's galley made it impossible to feed her crew of over 1,000 men and that he had therefore decided to save the crew and sink his ship. He added that the contractor and his staff who came from Buenos Aires had been prevented from coming on board the battleship for several hours on December 16. The German Government protested and expressed the view that the Uruguayan Government were responsible for the loss of the *Admiral Graf von Spee*. They merely drew a firm official rejoinder.

On Monday afternoon Captain Langsdorff and the officers and men of the sunken battleship arrived at Buenos Aires. On Wednesday morning he was found dead. He had shot himself. His friends at Buenos Aires asserted that he had hoped to take his ship out and fight to the end but had been overruled by superior orders.

from Berlin. He was buried with full honours on the following day, and Captain Pottinger, master of the *Ashlea*, who had been for many weeks his prisoner, represented the other liberated masters at his funeral. It was therefore something of a shock, even to those who knew to what lengths of mendacious scurrility Dr Goebbels could go, to find the Official German News Agency alleging six days after the funeral of the *Admiral Graf von Spee's* dead at Montevideo that British seamen had spat on their coffins and thrown a dead dog on their graves !

The victory aroused great enthusiasm among the Allies and their friends abroad. Even in Italy it was admitted that the Germans had suffered a reverse, while the Turkish newspaper *Jumhuriyet* made the best and pithiest comment on the battle in the headline "Nelson's grandsons". The German public was instructed to believe that this had really been a German victory, a belief which subsequent events must have thoroughly dispelled.

The King and his Government showed their gratitude to the victors promptly and generously. Commodore Harwood was promoted to be a Rear-Admiral and appointed K C B. The captains of the three ships were all appointed Companions of that Most Honourable Order. Officers and men of the *Ajax* and *Exeter* were enthusiastically welcomed in London on February 23 when they were inspected by the King and were entertained by the Lord Mayor and Corporation at the Guildhall, where Mr Churchill thanked them in a felicitous speech. By a happy coincidence on the same day H M S *Achilles* reached Auckland to receive a splendid welcome from the people of that proud Antipodean city.

Here are a few examples of the courage, resource and

endurance shown by all ranks in the fight. They are taken from the Supplement to the *London Gazette*, which enumerated the recipients of honours and distinctions, and the names of those mentioned in dispatches.<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant R. E. Washbourn, R.N., H.M.S. *Achilles*, "when early in the action several splinters struck the gun director tower killing three men and wounding two others inside the tower, though wounded on the head by a splinter which half-stunned him and killed the man behind him, continued to control the main armament with the utmost coolness. He set a magnificent example to the rest of the director tower crew, who all stood to their posts and made light of the incident."

Midshipman Cameron, R.N., and Able Seaman Gwilliam, H.M.S. *Exeter*, were together when an 11-in. shell burst above ammunition locker and set it alight. The Midshipman with great calmness and foresight ordered the two nearest guns' crews to shelter. The locker exploded, wounding some of the second gun's crew. As soon as the main burst of flame had subsided he and Gwilliam smothered the flames of the burning woodwork and flung the hot but still unexploded shells overboard without any regard for their own safety, after which Gwilliam put out a fire on the exposed upper deck.

On board H.M.S. *Ajax*, Warrant-Shipwright Panter was knocked down and wounded by "the explosion of an 11-in. shell which started fires, filled the compartment with smoke and put out all lights." He went at once "to the centre of the damage where he encouraged and directed the repair parties and did all he could to limit and control the ill effects." Among those who received the medal for conspicuous gallantry—a posthumous honour in his case—was Private Russell, a Royal Marine

<sup>1</sup> February 22, 1940



of H M S *Exeter*, "who having his left forearm blown away and his right arm shattered when a turret was put out of action by a direct hit from an 11-in. shell refused all but first aid, remained on deck and went about cheering on his shipmates and putting courage into them by his great fortitude, and did not give in until the heat of battle was over. He has since died of wounds"<sup>1</sup>

## 5 THE EASTERN ARMIES

At the outbreak of war the British garrison of Palestine, although it had been reduced, was far above the normal effective. The British garrison of Egypt was fixed at roughly a division and a half in 1938, and the Allied Egyptian Army was being re-equipped and intensively trained, with the assistance of a strong British military mission. The censorship and the first temporary closing of the Mediterranean<sup>2</sup> to British commerce enabled the reinforcement of the British garrisons to be carried out silently and swiftly. Reinforcements of Indian troops arrived from Bombay, other units were said to have reached the Near East from British ports.

Nor were the French idle, indeed there is reason to believe that the reinforcements sent to Syria, which was garrisoned in peace by rather more than a division of French and African troops and about as many local levies, greatly exceeded British contingents. Most of their new troops came from North and West Africa, but they included numerous European units and, it is believed,

<sup>1</sup> His valour and fate recall the death of Witherington, of whom one version of 'Chevy Chase' says

"For Wetharryngton my heart was woe,  
That ever he slain should be,  
For when both his legs were hewn in two,  
Yet he kneeled and fought on his knee"

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards reopened.

a large number of technical formations. Both British and French strengthened their air forces in this region with new machines and additional pilots and within three months of the invasion of Poland, German and Russian newspapers, both highly inspired, were beginning to refer to the large forces of "colonial troops" concentrated in the Near East as a sign that the Allies intended ere long to extend the war to the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> That was not their intention, but they had very good reasons for reinforcing their Near Eastern garrisons.

In Palestine the embers of the revolt of 1936-38 were still smouldering and although the Arab bands still ranging the country were composed of professional banditti, rather than die-hard Nationalists, the activities of German and to a less extent of Italian propagandists had not been entirely ineffectual, and failure to reinforce the garrison might have encouraged rebels who had retired from the field to try their luck again. In Syria, too, there were extreme Nationalists who might give trouble, and predatory communities, Druse, Bedoun, and Kurd, whose appetite for plunder might have been stimulated by any reduction of the garrison. Apart from these local considerations the attitude of Italy was uncertain and after the failure of the Russo-Turkish negotiations at Moscow, who could prophesy what the U S S R might attempt? The proximity of strong forces, well equipped with the most modern instruments of war, was an encouragement to the Turks, who had not then<sup>1</sup> received the latest weapons which they had been promised by the British and French Governments.

During the autumn and early winter the British troops in Palestine had several encounters with Arab bands which only became known through War Office announcements of decorations conferred on officers and men who

<sup>1</sup> These were supplied in due course





had distinguished themselves. Thus the Military Cross was awarded to Captain R. L. Garratt who showed conspicuous courage and coolness when his patrol was ambushed on September 12. The same War Office announcement referred to skirmishes on September 18 and 20, in the first of which Signalmen Barr and Private McColl, who were both wounded, received the Military Medal for their courage in operating an exposed wireless telegraphic set under heavy fire at short range. In December three military medals were won in a fierce encounter with Yusuf Hamdan, a bold bandit who was killed by Corporal Whiley (Royal Dragoons), one of the recipients of the award, in a point-blank encounter in a wood.

On February 12 a great fleet of transports anchored off Suez. It brought the Anzacs back to the lands where they had first seen service in 1915. At 9.30 a.m. Mr Eden, Secretary of State for the Dominions, who had flown from England to meet them, went on board the first New Zealand transport, accompanied by Sir Miles Lampson, the British Ambassador in Egypt, Sir Archibald Wavell, the G.O.C.-in-C. of the British forces in the Middle East, Major-General H. M. Wilson, Commander of the British troops in Egypt, and the Egyptian Military Governor of the Canal Zone. He greeted the new-comers on the King's behalf and addressed them after Sir Miles Lampson had read them a royal message of welcome. Later in the morning the Secretary of State and his companions visited the leading Australian transport on a similar errand. Already the New Zealanders were disembarking to march to the railway station and enter the trains that were to carry them to Kantara on their way to Palestine. The new-comers were composed of two contingents, the Second Australian Imperial Force—the First had fought in the Four Year'

War—and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force The Australians were temporarily commanded by Brigadier Allen pending the arrival of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Blaney

Sir Thomas, an Australian born, had served with distinction in the Australian Imperial Force in 1914-18, and had been mentioned seven times in dispatches. The New Zealanders were commanded by a remarkable soldier, Major-General Freyberg, who had won the V C in the Great War, in which he had been wounded nine times, had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order with two bars, had swum by night to the Bulair lines behind the Turkish defences at the Dardanelles, had lurked in the scrub and taken notes of the enemy's dispositions and had swum away to be picked up only after spending two hours in the dark water <sup>1</sup>

The movement of the Antipodean army into Palestine was rapidly effected. Camps had been prepared. The population, Jewish and Arab alike, joined the British Army in welcoming the Anzacs, and the reinforcements quickly settled down to their training under infinitely pleasanter climatic conditions than Northern Europe could afford at that season, and in a country which provided a great diversity of terrain for manoeuvre—rugged mountain and broad plain, "close country" in the orange groves round the coastal cities, desert in the south. They were well prepared for their new experiences, far better than the original Anzacs had been; and the pocket book issued to the Second A I F contained a list of hints—notably on "How to behave abroad" which was a model of good advice.

Palestine did more than receive troops. It provided them. At the end of February a Pioneer Unit of Jews

<sup>1</sup> For the full account, by Sir James Barrie, of this notable feat, see Vol I, *The First Quarter*

with an Arab minority landed at Marseilles for service with the British Expeditionary Force in France and it was understood that more were to follow. It was also announced that an infantry unit was to be raised in Cyprus, a step that might<sup>1</sup> have been taken in the Italian crisis of 1935. By March, it was plain to the world that the Allied High Command had not only strengthened the defence of the "land bridge" between Africa and Asia against any attack but had built up a powerful strategic reserve at this vital centre of British and French imperial communications by sea and air with East Africa, Australasia, India and the Far East.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. an article by the author in *The Observer*

## CHAPTER II

### THE RUSSO-FINNISH WAR

*Finlands sak ar var*—Finland's cause is ours

—DR GUNTHER, Swedish Foreign Minister

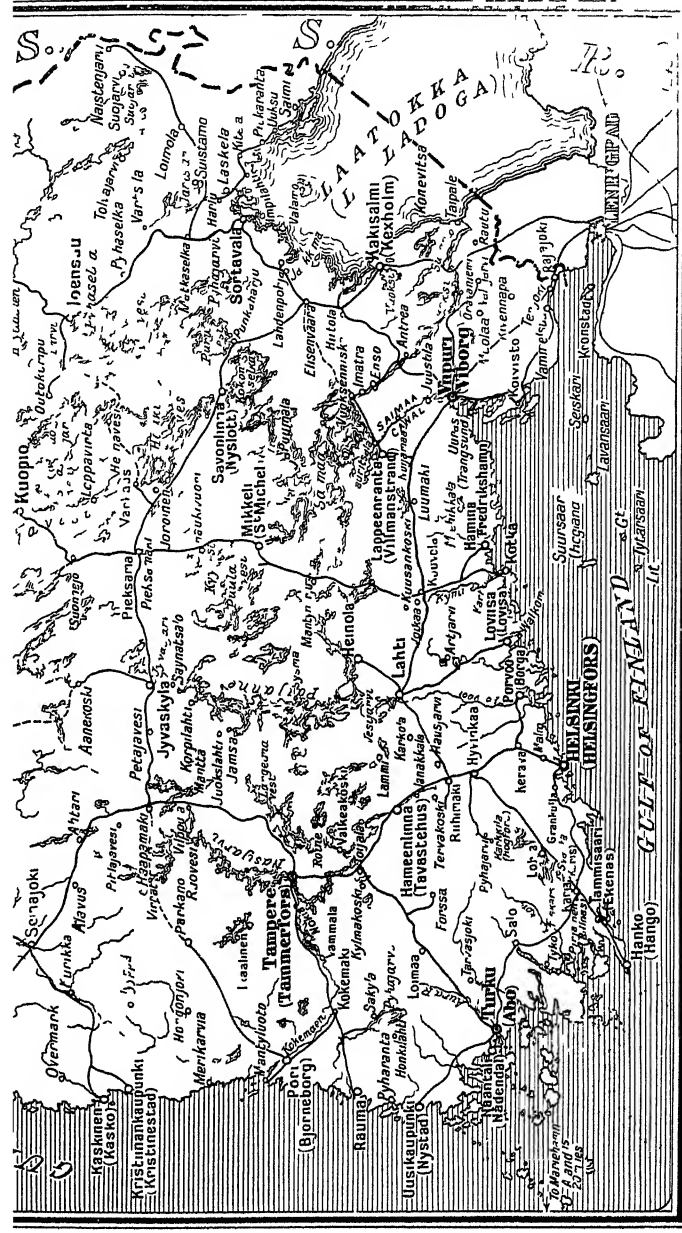
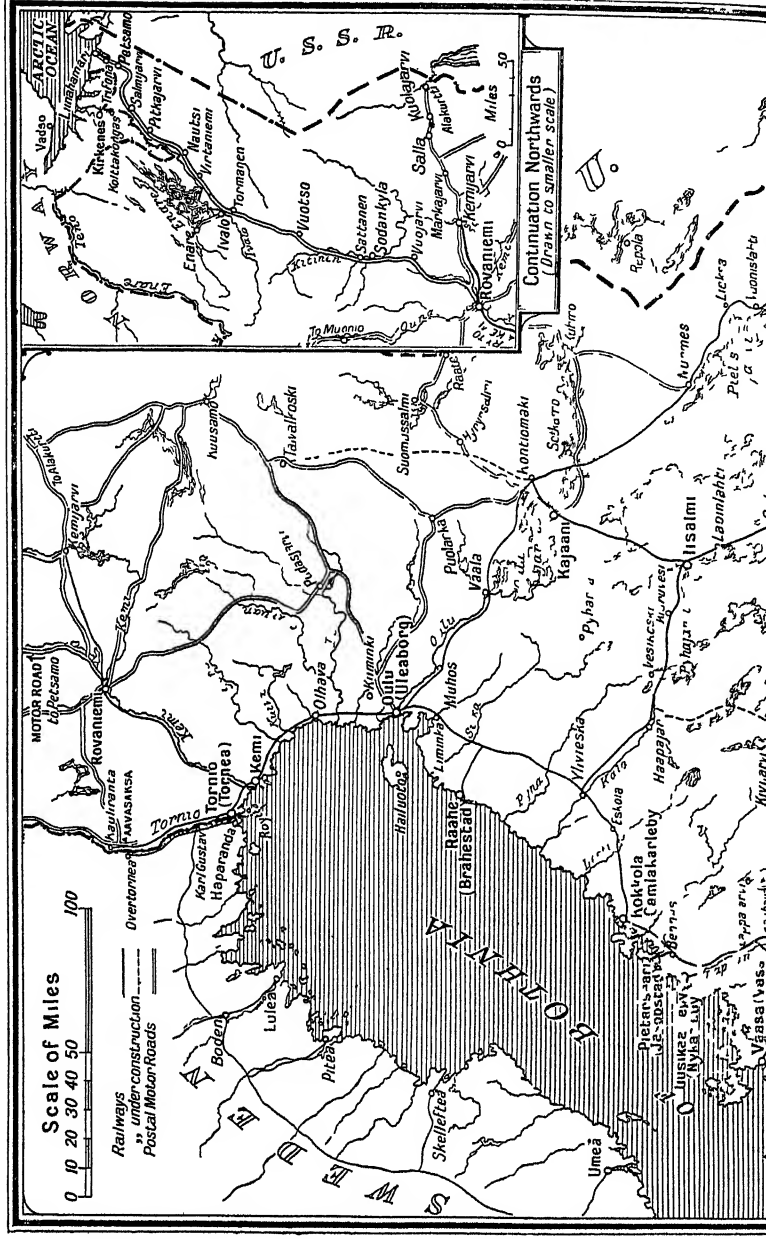
Finland will be more grateful for help sent now than when she is dead —Finnish lady's letter to *The Times*, February 1940

Finland's cause was the neutrals' cause—and the world's cause —R S

Before the course of the Russo-Finnish war is described, it is necessary to explain the geographical setting within which it was fought. The easiest approach to the Finnish capital and to the cultivated and more closely settled country along the south coast of Finland is the Karelian Isthmus between the Gulf of Finland and the huge Lake of Ladoga. It is heavily wooded in parts, with numerous outcrops of the granite which forms the indented southern coast and the numerous islands that lie off or in its bays and promontories. North of Lake Ladoga stretches an almost continuous belt of pine forest, broken only by an incredible number of lakes of all shapes and sizes, with a low granitic ridge, the "Suomen Selka," forming part of the frontier for some fifty miles and then diverging into north central Finland. The forest belt which extends far into the Russian territory between the Finnish border and the White Sea stretches for more than 400 miles from the northern coast of Ladoga to a point close to the Arctic circle. Thence it dies down into pine scrub and disappears in a bare region broken by scattered rocky hills, marshes, and lakes which extend to the small Finnish frontage on the Arctic Ocean.









and include Enara, one of the largest lakes in Europe. This northern territory produces nothing but the reindeer herds tended by nomadic Lapps, and the recently discovered nickel mines near Lunahamari in the Petsamo district. The influence of the Gulf Stream keeps the Arctic coast and the fjord of Petsamo ice-free during the winter, a circumstance that gave the Russians some advantage, but a short distance inland the climate is terribly severe and indeed the whole country is covered with snow and often with very deep snow for five months on the Baltic Coast and half the year in the interior. The Gulf of Finland freezes in December, the Gulf of Bothnia in the same month, and neither is open until April in all but exceptional years. The only roads and railways so disposed as to bring the Russian troops to the border were the two railway lines in the Karelian isthmus and the relatively good roads there. To attack Finland from Lake Ladoga by water or over ice was theoretically possible. From the Murmansk Railway which ran more or less parallel with the Finnish boundary to that Russian port on the Arctic Ocean, the Russians must concentrate troops at various points in the thinly inhabited region known as Russian Karelia and thence march them through the forests by indifferent roads—often mere tracks—to the border. This was some twenty-five miles away at Kandalaksha but a hundred miles distant at other points. They had, however, improved some of these roads in 1938 and a good deal of work seems to have been done in the summer of 1939, no doubt after Stalin had decided to support the Fuhrer in his aggression on Poland and had understood that he was to receive his *quid pro quo* in the Baltic. There is every reason to believe that they began their concentration along the line of the Murmansk Railway some time before the negotiations with the Finns opened in October. The

normal capacity of this line was not believed to exceed five trains a day and this figure was probably excessive during the snowy periods with which the winter normally begins. The deportation during the last ten years of most of the Karelian Finns (either because they were ill-affected to the Communist regime or because they were religious or simply because their standard of living was too high to make them contented with the untidy squalor that the Bolshevik regime had generalized), and the substitution of smaller numbers of Russian settlers enabled the Soviet Army to make its preparations behind the forest screen, without attracting much attention until they were far advanced. The peace strength of the Russian Army was believed to amount to from 100 to 110 divisions with a large number of tank brigades. Divisions were powerfully equipped with anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, and with field artillery. The war effective of a division with its normal strength of three battalion regiments, divisional artillery, tanks, transport and other auxiliary services amounted to 18,000 men. The numerous cavalry divisions which the Red Army had put into the field against Poland in the march on Warsaw in 1920 appear to have been partly mechanized. Much is now known of its training and leadership, and of the material which it brought into use. It was certainly well equipped in many respects, and highly, indeed too highly, mechanized. Guns, tanks, lorries and machine-guns were of good quality, though not so well kept as those of Germany or the Western armies. The quality of the infantry varied. The Reserve Divisions, although well provided with transport and heavily mechanized, lacked a sufficient cadre of professional troops, and the reservists who formed the vast majority of these formations had apparently not been called up since they finished their course. There was,

moreover, abundant evidence to show that when mobilization orders were received the local authorities went to the "highways and hedges" and called out a number of men who had never received any military training at all. On the other hand some of the first-line divisions employed in the attacks on the Mannerheim Line were well trained and showed initiative as well as courage, which last quality the Russian soldier has never lacked. Still, speaking generally, the Russian infantry displayed the defects of their qualities, more especially in the forest fighting north of Lake Ladoga. The higher leading was bad. The great military purge of 1937 had deprived the Army of some 5,000 officers of the higher ranks and many regiments and even divisions were led by men who had been insufficiently trained and had no experience. The appointment to every unit from the battalion upwards of Political Commissars representing the Communist Party, who were responsible for the political reliability and the discipline of the troops, for propaganda, and apparently for the treatment of prisoners of war<sup>1</sup>, and the attitude of the Red Army towards conquered populations cannot have been militarily helpful. The OGPU troops, composed of picked and fanatical Communists, seem to have been employed in Finland in charge of the machine-gun detachments, which were ordered to fire upon such of their own troops as disliked crossing the open under heavy fire<sup>2</sup>. Unlike those of most *bourgeois* armies their officers appear to have been extremely indifferent to the comfort and

<sup>1</sup> All stories of the shooting of prisoners of war, whether in Finland or Poland, attribute them to the orders given by these Commissars.

<sup>2</sup> These stories are too well substantiated to be doubted. Numbers of Russian prisoners in Finland gave evidence that they were told that any sign of flinching would result in their being mown down by their own machine-guns, cf. Sir Walter Citrine's *My Finnish Diary*.

billeting of their men<sup>1</sup> At the same time, many of the mistakes made in the earlier stages of the campaign seem to have been due to the totally inaccurate information supplied to the Communist Government of the U S S R by its agents and those of the Comintern They were informed that the working classes in Finland—and, no doubt, in other countries—were ready to welcome their liberation from the capitalist yoke, and they consequently gave their *imprimatur* to propaganda destined for their own troops, the painful disproof of which by Finnish resistance would have had disastrous political results in a country where public opinion existed and was permitted some freedom of expression

The Russian Tank Corps appears to have been organized in brigades, but tank companies would seem to have been attached to all divisions Various types of tank were in use on the Finnish front, including the 70-ton monsters which used to be prominent at May Day celebrations and other ceremonial parades at Moscow Their limitations in the Finnish theatre of war were soon exposed, and in addition they do not seem to have been intelligently used The belief of the Russian Communist in the invincibility of the machine and the great strength of the Russian army in tanks, of which it was reputed to possess 9,000, doubtless explains why these expensive engines were handled so recklessly as to provoke criticism in at least one Red Army periodical On the other hand the Russian artillery, which had been trained to some extent under German auspices, was good, although the proportion of "dud" shells was rather high Taken all in all, the Red Army was handicapped by bad tactical leadership, by the appalling and indeed exceptional cold of the winter of 1939-40, by the lack of intelligence of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* Cf also the accounts of several competent correspondents who had an opportunity of talking to prisoners of war

the bulk of its rank and file, and by the political miscalculations of the Government. In the great plains of Eastern Europe it might have made a better showing but it was unquestionably inferior in quality to the French, British and German armies.

Still its good military equipment and its numbers—which in peace-time amounted to probably 1,500,000, and had been much more than doubled by the mobilization ordered in September—made it a force to be reckoned with by the most powerful neighbours of the Soviet Union. Russian heavy industry had made great strides since Tsarist days without, however, approaching that of Europe, America and Japan in efficiency. Against its shortcomings must be set the fact that the shifting of the chief centres of military production to or towards the Urals enabled the Soviet Government to regard a war on its borders with more equanimity than did those nations whose arsenals and armament factories were in range of German bombing aeroplanes. On the other hand the Russian railways were inefficiently run, much of the material was in bad order, and the frequent complaints of the Soviet Press in the years preceding the war had given the impression that the discipline and training of the railway staffs left a great deal to be desired. Moreover the increasing dependence of the Russian Army and mechanized agriculture upon oil fuel made their military, ~~naval~~, and aerial efficiency in war conditional on the maintenance of output of the oilfields of Baku, Grozny and Maikop in Cis- and Trans-caucasia. And that region would be exposed to attack in the event of the opening of the Black Sea to hostile fleets, or of a major war in the Near and Middle East.

The Russian Air Force had at one time bulked very big in the imaginations of the friends and enemies of the U S S R. It proved to have a far smaller number of



modern machines than had been expected. Types which had been up to date in the Spanish Civil War, in which a number of Russian aeroplanes were supplied to the Spanish Republican Government—while their gold lasted—were still in the first line, but were antiquated by comparison with those used by Germany and the Western Powers. Nor was the *personnel* of the Russian Air Force so good as propagandists would have had the world believe.

The Russian machines identified in Finland, where so many were shot down, appear to have belonged to the following types, at least at the outset of the campaign. The SB bomber was credited with a maximum speed of 250 m p h. It had a moderate bomb-carrying capacity, cramped accommodation for the crew and a radius of rather more than 600 miles. The TB 3, a large medium bomber with four engines and no great speed, and a heavy bomber, perhaps the TB 6, which was credited with a speed of 280 m p h, 1,200 miles range and a capacity for two tons of bombs, were also employed. The fighters were the I 153, of which no details are known yet, the I 15, which had been used in Spain and China and was described by American pilots as very manoeuvrable and could do 225 m p h for 2½ hours, and the I 16. The last was said to do 280 m p h, but this appears to be a gross exaggeration. Its endurance was only 1½ hours. Both I 15 and I 16 were partly built of wood. The reconnaissance and naval machines were antiquated. Troop carriers were said to have been used in the north. They were slow machines, holding some thirty men, with a speed of 130 m p h. Most of these machines were fitted with skis as well as wheels. The oil they used did not freeze even at very low temperatures. The quality of their pilots was fair at the outset but soon fell off owing to losses.

The Russian fleet in the Baltic included two old Dreadnought battleships, the *Marat* and *Oktiabrskaya Revoliutsiya*, slow, ill ventilated, and unhealthy, two cruisers, the *Kirof* and *Maxim Gorki* type, carrying six 7-in guns and credited with 35 knots, perhaps two dozen destroyers, some of French or Italian design with speeds of over 36 knots, and some older and slower vessels. There were also over twenty submarines of 850-900 tons and a much larger number of small U-boats of about 200 tons, for coast defence purposes, with some mine-laying submarines and a large number of coastal motor torpedo boats of high speed. The efficiency of the Red Fleet was a subject of dispute.

Against the overwhelming might of the Soviet Government the Finnish Republic could pit a total of perhaps seven divisions after mobilization. The peace strength of the Finnish Army amounted to about 33,000 officers and men organized in three infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and a small force of light tanks and armoured cars. There was also a force of coastal artillery manning the forts on the coast and on the island of Kexholm in Lake Ladoga. The naval forces consisted of two monitors, the *Ilmarinen* and *Vammoinen*, each carrying four 10-in guns and eight 4-in quick-firers, seven motor torpedo boats, three mine-layers, and three submarines, with some unimportant small craft. With the Army and the Air Force they were under the Minister of Defence. Behind the first-line forces was a Civic Guard of 100,000 men, who were the successors of the volunteer force formed by the Right and Centre parties in the Finnish Civil War of 1918. Those of them who were past the age of active or first reserve service were assigned a variety of useful tasks, coast watching, protection of factories and bridges and the like in war, while in peace they formed a sort of volunteer force which could be used to assist the regulars.

in case of sudden need. An organization comprising members of all parties but the Socialists before the war, they became a national militia, including Socialists also, during its course.

The quality of the Finnish troops was high. They were athletic, intelligent, and brave. They were excellently officered throughout, and their Commander-in-Chief in war, Field-Marshal Baron Mannerheim, was a born leader and a first-rate trainer of the Finnish Staff. They were extremely mobile in winter, for the Finns use skis almost as soon as they can walk. They were well armed with the lighter weapons, and a "machine pistol" of the "Suomi" (Finland) model which they used was a most effective weapon in forest fighting. Their artillery was weak. They had not enough field guns to supply all their divisions with their full equipment, no mobile heavy batteries and no great reserves of rifles, machine-guns or ammunition. They had few modern anti-tank guns, and their supply of anti-aircraft guns was far short of their needs. But they used what weapons they possessed with deadly effect. Their marksmanship was excellent, their leadership brilliant, their morale superb. Behind them was a united people. The factory workers, the peasantry and the seafaring folk were equally determined to resist the Russian invader. The Women's organization known as the "Lotta Svärd" from the heroine of one of the great Runeberg's poems, did admirable non-combatant work, air raid protection, nursing, coast watching, the care of old, infirm or sick persons removed from endangered areas, washing, cleaning and mending uniforms—nothing came amiss to these devoted women.

The Finnish Air Force was very small. Its effective machines were numbered in tens against the hundreds which the Russians employed on the various Finnish

fronts They had a few Bristol Bulldogs—which, though outclassed by the more modern British machines, were effective enough against the Russian machines—some Blenheim bombers, and they had ordered a few fairly modern Italian aircraft Of a nominal strength of about 130 machines, not more than half were battle-worthy But their pilots were superlatively good and when new aircraft arrived, though all too few, from abroad, they handled these machines with astonishing confidence and success

The Russian plan of campaign provided for the invasion of Finland at five different points The main attack which was at first entrusted to six infantry divisions sought to force the "Mannerheim line," a fortified zone full of pill-boxes, fortified dug-outs, tank traps and other obstacles with a core of small forts, disposed in three lines The line, or rather zone, had been slightly fortified after the War of Independence In 1938 the Finnish public felt that these defences needed to be supplemented A student society volunteered to dig The Government, though they had not initiated the proposal, accepted it gladly and the students began their work under military supervision Thousands of volunteers devoted their holidays to the work, with the result that the zone was filled with small fortified posts and tank traps and made into a formidable defensive system The forts were generally more or less triangular structures with a bastion-apex pointing towards Russia They were constructed of reinforced concrete, six feet thick, protected by several yards of earthwork They each carried a gun, often a rather antiquated but still useful Tsarist Russian field gun, with heavy machine-guns firing through embrasures at the sides and light machine-guns as well The quarters for the men who held them were comfortable All the forts were provided with telephones and most had field

wireless installations as well. They had been excellently sited and the best use had been made of the numerous small lakes in the isthmus and of the Vuoksi lake and river system, where a river with too fierce a current to freeze, save in exceptionally bitter weather, covered the left of the line. It was a strong position, but only Russian propagandists compared it to the Maginot Line.

Immediately north of Lake Ladoga where the Finns had erected some more modest defences to prevent the enemy from rounding the head of the Lake and outflanking the Mannerheim position from the north, at least four Russian divisions came into action almost at once. Other forces threatened the Finnish "waistline." The third advance moved from Uhtua to the frontier village of Raate. The fourth approached Salla from Kandalaksha. The fifth took ship at Murmansk and descended on the Arctic port of Petsamo.

The fortunes of these columns must be related separately. The Arctic force encountered no opposition on the coast. There were no Finnish troops there. But when the Russian advance-guard pressed on towards the nickel mines, the miners with a few coastguards and frontier guards held them off for several days, inflicting considerable losses on the invaders in the Arctic night while they covered the flight of their non-combatants into Norway.

But the Russians were persistent. They landed light tanks in some numbers at Lunahamari—a remarkable feat with nothing but a small wooden jetty for a landing place; bombers from Murmansk dropped quantities of high explosive on the settlement of Kolosjoki, where the nickel mines awaited development. The Finns held on as long as they could, then fell back, destroying all buildings which might shelter the enemy and strengthened by small reinforcements (which had been hurried up on skis from

the south), to Hoyhenjarvi. Here they again checked the Russian advance. On this front, a Finnish officer, one Captain Pukila, betrayed the position of the minefield that the Finns had laid in Petsamo Bay and that of the ammunition and provision dumps near the road from Tornio to the Arctic Ocean. He and his accomplices paid the penalty. The weather was appallingly cold but the Russians none the less forced their way forward, pushing the Finns back to Nautsi, some 40 miles from the coast. Then the frost and the blizzards that killed as many of them as did the Finnish rifles and machine-guns drove them back half the distance that they had covered, and the campaign settled down to an affair of patrol encounters and reconnaissances till the end of February, when the Russians again advanced and the Finns fell back to Nautsi.

The fourth column, though not successful, was the least unfortunate of those which crossed the Eastern frontier of Finland north of Lake Ladoga. It seems to have been composed of two infantry divisions from the Ukraine. Its vanguard occupied Salla, some thirty miles inland, by December 12 and, after a temporary check until the main body had arrived, the Russians pushed on to Markajarvi. What was apparently a strong detachment had moved north-west from Salla to Savukoski and thence marched through the snow in the direction of the road linking the head of the Gulf of Bothnia with the Arctic. Possession of this road would have cut off the retreat of the Finns on the Arctic Front. An advance west of Markajarvi to the railhead of Kemijarvi on a branch of the railway linking Finland with Sweden would have cut off the land communications of the Finns with Sweden, their only link with the friendly outside world. For a short time the position of the small Finnish forces in this area was difficult. They were greatly

outnumbered. They had practically no artillery and had to depend on their extreme mobility and their powers of harassing the enemy with machine-gun and rifle. Until December 18 the Russians were advancing slowly and with loss, but steadily, and on that date their main body was within ten miles of the Kemijärvi railhead and the detachment was only twenty-five miles from the Arctic road. But by now the Finns had received reinforcements. The main Russian force was held, the detachment was counter-attacked from both flanks up the Kemi river and driven back in confusion to Markajärvi. Some 1,500 Russians were left on the field, many perished or were killed during the retreat, and three tanks, five guns, and many machine-guns, lorries and other spoils fell into the hands of the victors. The intense cold left no severely wounded men alive after these battles. The main body then fell back on Salla, much harassed and leaving several hundred dead on the way, but maintaining its discipline and formation.

At Salla the Russians seem to have received reinforcements for they reoccupied Markajärvi but were again unable to advance to the West. Henceforward they fought a defensive campaign and they succeeded, greatly to their commander's credit, in keeping their communications with Kandalaksha open and in holding both Markajärvi and Salla in force. They were continually harassed by the Finnish ski-patrols, if their aircraft bombed Finnish villages and townlets they were themselves at times bombed by the reinforced Finnish air force, their attempts to outflank their waspish opponents by means of Siberian ski detachments which had joined them were unsuccessful, and one attempt to break out of Salla cost them 500 casualties. Nevertheless, they held on doggedly, kept the road to Kandalaksha open, received supplies and equipment by parachute, and their field



FINNISH SOLDIERS ON PATROL





fortresses of frozen snow, a foot of which stops a rifle bullet if closely packed, were too strong for the Finns to storm. Late in February the Swedish volunteers relieved five of the eight and a half Finnish battalions which had held the Russian onslaught on this front and were now required to stem the Russian advance on the Karelian isthmus. For two months the campaign in this sector had become almost stationary.

A less dangerous thrust was directed by the third Russian column from Uhtua, in Russian Karelia, towards Oulu (Uleaborg), the narrowest part of the Finnish "waist". Its leading division, the 163rd, which from its high number must have been a reserve division, crossed the border in the second week of December, with propaganda wagons, films, and a brass band, expecting the "oppressed" inhabitants to welcome their deliverers. They occupied the village of Suomussalmi, where they did the inhabitants no harm, and indeed endeavoured to placate them by offering the women incredibly cheap gewgaws. The only compulsion exercised upon them was that they were from time to time ordered to attend a cinematograph show where films presenting the almost deified Stalin were greatly in evidence. Beyond Suomasalmi lay the long irregularly shaped Lake Kianta. It had frozen hard by now, but crossing an expanse of open ice under fire was a costly operation and the Russians attempted to skirt the lake, one regiment moving southwards from Suomussalmi while two moved round the northern ends of Kianta. The remainder with the 44th division built a road from the frontier towards the lake. The country was thickly forested and the Russian soldiers hated the forests. The enlightened Communist prisoners said that "these peasants" were superstitious, but it is more probable that the darkness—for even at this latitude daylight lasted less than three hours—the

lack of maps or of men who could read them, and the ubiquity and mobility of the Finnish ski patrols were the real causes of their weakness in forest warfare. The Finns, almost invisible in their white snow-cloaks, were all round them, sniping or even bombing encampments at night, shooting up field kitchens, eluding strong and destroying weak patrols, sometimes raiding deep into Russian territory to destroy convoys, or cut up small parties of reinforcements moving up to the front. The forest had prevented any deployment.

Two columns were speedily held and then defeated in turn. The southern force was jammed on a narrow road by the destruction of a tank and shot to pieces, only remnants escaping to Raate. The two regiments north of the lake seem to have held out for several days suffering horribly from cold and hunger. Finally the Finns closed in on them. The starving men had been plied with grisly tales of the cruelties of the Finns, who, as a matter of fact, treated their captives humanely.<sup>1</sup> Many fought it out with frostbitten trigger fingers and feet. Others fled to the ice of the lake, refused to surrender and were killed. Some ran into the forests where most perished of cold and starvation. A remnant of the Division escaped to the border where the 44th Division, a first-line formation, had been waiting, unwilling or unable to rescue its companion, and harassed by the ubiquitous Finnish patrols.

The 44th Division began to advance at the New Year. It reached Raate and presently found itself surrounded.

<sup>1</sup> The most sardonic story, even if slightly apocryphal, is of the three Russian prisoners. "Are you going to shoot me?" asked Prisoner No. 1. The Finns said no. "Are you going to shoot him?" asked Prisoner No. 1, pointing to No. 2. "And not him either?" asked No. 1 and No. 2 together, pointing to the third, who was standing a few feet away. Again the Finns denied any such cruel intent. "Then," said the first two prisoners, "can we shoot him?" You see, he is a Commissar."

by much less than half its number of extremely mobile Finns. After several days of misery and hunger, during which supplies were cut off, patrols destroyed, and the horses ate the bark off the pines, the division attempted to break out of the net. A 33-ton tank in the middle of the four-mile column broke down or was put out of action by the Finnish light guns. Surrounded by swarms of rapidly moving riflemen and machine-gunners, the head of the column came to a standstill. The rest was a battue rather than a battle, 1,000 prisoners, some 60 guns, a great number of machine-guns and trench mortars, scores of tanks and other vehicles fell into the hands of the victors. Over 10,000 Russians are believed to have perished, and few of those who broke out into the dark forests can have escaped. The horror of Arctic war was illustrated by the discovery nearly a week after the destruction of the division had been announced<sup>1</sup> of a group of Russians who had been hiding in the woods keeping themselves alive on the flesh of dead horses. They were the survivors of a large party of fugitives. So horribly had they been frostbitten that their ears and portions of their scalps fell off when their headgear was removed. None recovered.

The defeat of this thrust, which probably cost the Russians 20,000 lives, from first to last made an end of serious fighting in this sector of the front. Later fresh troops, perhaps two battalions strong, with a squadron of cavalry, made one or two reconnaissances in force. The cavalry were lured into drift snow and killed off. An infantry battalion recoiled from the entrenched positions where the Finns had established themselves on the border. Farther south small Russian forces made demonstrations towards the Joensuu-Nurmes railway but were easily held.

<sup>1</sup> The Finnish victory was announced on January 8

Line, or again to outflank it from the north-east, is not clear. At all events, the attack failed with very heavy losses, and left the 18th Division at Syskyjarvi and the 168th Division at Kitela greatly reduced in numbers, terribly short of supplies, eating their horses, and otherwise dependent for food on parcels dropped from aeroplanes. The 34th Tank Brigade, a Moscow unit which had been sent to extricate the 18th Division, was in turn immobilized by the destruction of its fuel supplies. The Kuhmo force was also held up. It lost the equivalent of a battalion in attacks on an entrenched Finnish position, and its patrols, whether on foot or on ski, suffered heavily. In mid-February a Russian ski regiment which knew how to manœuvre off the tracks was drawn away from the main body, and finally dug itself in on two low hills, where Russian aircraft attempted to supply it by dropping provisions and equipment from the air. It had no artillery, and when the Finns closed in on it the exhaustion of the men prevented them from breaking out. After forty-eight hours' fighting it was destroyed, as much by cold as by the relentless pressure of its opponents. At least 1,500 men were killed or taken. The Finnish losses, as in nearly all these encounters, were relatively slight.

On February 18 came the destruction of the remains of the 18th Division. The flight of some of its units, the destruction of others, had left about 5,000 men out of the original 17,000, with about 100 guns of all sorts, and 16 tanks in laager.

The Divisional Commander, General Kondrasheff, had escaped, with some of his troops, to the laager of the 34th Tank Brigade, where General Kondratyeff, its commander, awaited relief. The Finns might have rushed the 18th Division's position, but they could not risk heavy losses, the Mannerheim Line called for reinforcements, and they contented themselves with cutting off outposts,

bombarding the laager, and picking up any equipment or food dropped from the air that fell, as much did, at any distance from the Russian machine-guns. On February 18 they were able to overpower the frostbitten and starving remnants of the garrison. Their booty comprised a great number of guns, details of which are interesting as showing the artillery equipment of a first-line Russian Division. They were 12 heavy and 12 light field howitzers, 12 long-range ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ -in) field guns, 12 field guns, two so-called regimental guns, four anti-tank, and 12 anti-aircraft guns, a total of 66 pieces. For the remainder of February the Finns were chiefly occupied on this front attacking the convoys that followed the shore of Lake Ladoga to Kitela, and harassing the beleaguered 34th Tank Brigade.

While the Finns were always able to retreat, and often to advance on the eastern fronts, retreat on the Karelian Isthmus was precluded. There their only chance was to hold out as long as possible in the hope that they would obtain aid from abroad before the immense weight of their opponents could overpower them. Marshal Mannerheim had no illusions as to the capacity of his troops to hold out indefinitely, indeed, at an early stage of the war he is said to have remarked to an optimist that Finland would be fortunate if she held out for a month. His great need was for heavy artillery. Finland had not equipment for 200,000 men, and her modern artillery did not exceed 250 guns, including the immobile heavies of the coastal artillery. The Finnish arms factories were few, and could supply no great quantities of small arms and munitions. In a war of attrition, such as every war of positions tends to become, the dice were heavily loaded in favour of the Russian giant.

The six divisions that crossed the Russo-Finnish border on November 30 met with many difficulties before they

reached the fortified zone. As Soviet war correspondents feelingly complained, the Finns left mines on the roads which did not, of course, destroy the Red tanks, but caused their crews to "suffer from concussion".<sup>1</sup> They also burnt all buildings and stock which they could not remove. After experiencing some losses, the Russians pushed forward to the Finnish outpost line, which they reached on December 5. Then their troubles began.

At first, the Russians used their tanks unintelligently. They let them loose on the Finnish outpost lines without any effective artillery preparation, with results that disappointed them and encouraged the defenders. Now and later the Finns met these engines with astonishing courage and ingenuity. Some they stopped with their few anti-tank guns, others they blew up with contact mines laid on the roads. Devoted volunteers lay hidden in holes dug at points which the tanks were likely to pass. If the tank passed over or near the hole, its occupant would leap out and lob a bomb under the tail of the tank or fling a bottle of incendiary liquid over the machine. Sometimes it caught fire and was burnt out, while at other times it stopped and the crew, getting out to extinguish the flames,<sup>1</sup> provided an easy target for the nearest snipers' post or machine-gun nest. On other occasions, Finns hiding in the holes or behind cover, rushed in and thrust a stout timber between the wheels, thus jamming the driving apparatus. And a stationary tank was a gift to any troops armed with anti-tank weapons. Apart from these means of attacking, the Finns defended themselves by traps and obstacles, the granite gateposts and boundary marks of fields proving as useful

<sup>1</sup> *Teste* Sir Walter Citrine, *loc cit*, p. 118. Russian tanks, he learnt, were indescribably dirty and covered with oil, which explained why they took fire so easily.

as the concrete anti-tank barriers of Western armies. The forests were, of course, impassable for tanks great or small.

On December 7 the Russian advanced troops reached the Taipale River, which covered the Mannerheim Line on the northern side of the Karelian Isthmus. A party of them crossed it at night at a point where the ice was strong enough, and were only repelled after a hard fight in which the Finns suffered some loss. By December 10 the Russians were through the outpost zone, where they lost eighty tanks, some of which had been captured by the defenders.

On December 12 the Russians began to attack the first line of defence, and maintained their attacks with varying degrees of intensity until New Year's Eve. They devoted most attention to the frozen Suvanto Lake at the mouth of the river at Taipale, the crossing of which might have enabled them to turn the position from the lake side, and to the Muolaa and other lakes which, being frozen, gave the attack a wider front on which to advance. A frozen lake, however, does not give the attack any cover whatever, as the Russians found to their cost. They reached the Finnish wire on not a few occasions, but their thrusts, which were usually local, were ineffective, their tanks were rashly and expensively handled, and their artillery preparation, though sometimes heavy, was wasteful and ill co-ordinated. Although, by the end of the year, they had nine divisions on the isthmus, they had made no headway, had suffered over 20,000 casualties, and a serious loss of prestige.

During the first month of the war the Russian air arm was sporadically active. Nine aircraft were shot down by Finnish fighter planes or anti-aircraft guns on the first day of the war, and the pilot who was killed after machine-gunning a crowd of refugees at Helsinki proved to be a



woman On December 19 the coastal towns were repeatedly attacked, and the Russians celebrated Stalin's birthday on December 21 by further attacks on towns, and by pursuing and machine-gunning trains. Some 300 machines were up on this occasion, and the Russians lost thirty-five aircraft between December 19 and 21.

This did not prevent the Russians from making vicious air attacks on Christmas Day. The citizens of Helsinki spent five hours under cover while twenty-three bombers attempted to attack the city and dropped numerous leaflets from the puppet Prime Minister Kuusinen, but were prevented by the anti-aircraft guns, which shot two down, from doing any great damage. Other towns were less fortunate. Viipuri (Viborg), Turku (Åbo), and other centres suffered no small damage, though the loss of life was small. Viipuri suffered, as well, from a long-range gun, probably of 12-in or 14-in calibre, which bombarded it during the Christmas period. Russian aircraft repeated this barbarous performance on New Year's Eve, doing great damage at Vaasa. The freezing of the Gulf of Finland prevented the Soviet fleet from displaying any great activity beyond the capture of a few unfortified and uninhabited islets after "naval engagements" which were solemnly chronicled by the kept Communist Press. A Russian cruiser of the Kirof class was damaged while attacking the Hangö forts, and a destroyer sunk. Another destroyer was badly hit off Åbo on December 14. Meanwhile, Russian submarines had blockaded the Finnish coast in the best German style, sinking several neutral vessels, a German among them, and two or three Finnish small craft. One succeeded in getting through the barrier of mines laid by the Finns to protect the channel between Finland and the Åland Islands, and, after sinking a Finnish yacht and a Swedish merchantman, perished

in the minefield on its return journey January was a relatively quiet month on the Karelian Isthmus, but the Finns had no illusions as to the causes of the respite. The Russians were bringing up large numbers of fresh troops, including several first-line divisions and a mass of heavy artillery. Meanwhile, they had decided on a new form or rather a methodical intensification of attack on non-military objectives from the air. From January 12 onwards towns, villages, isolated houses, churches, and hospitals, in spite or because of their display of the red cross, were bombed all over Finland whenever the weather was favourable. The loss of life was not very great, thanks to the admirable discipline and excellent A R P service maintained by the citizens of the republic, in fact, the Soviet Government had the cynicism to repudiate the charge that their airmen had bombed or machine-gunned civilians, on the ground that the deaths then recorded had not exceeded 400 ! The airmen machine-gunned children going along the roads, elderly fishermen, funerals, passenger and ambulance trains. The complaint of a Russian prisoner on being taken to a Red Cross hospital, "That is one of the houses our airmen bomb," suggests that there was design as well as accident in these attacks. Bombs of all varieties were used, and torpedo-like cylinders of eight feet in length, each of which was fitted with a propeller, containing a great number of small incendiary and shrapnel bombs. As the propeller turned, the sides of the cylinder opened and the contents were scattered. These contrivances were nicknamed "Molotov's breadbaskets" by the Finns. If the loss of life was relatively small, the distress caused by the destruction of houses, water mains, electric cables, and windows in an exceptionally bitter winter was great. One of the worst days was January 29, when fifty people were killed and 200 injured in Hango, and twenty-eight

killed and forty-six hurt in Turku. But it was a bad day for the Russian air fleet, which lost fifteen bombers out of 200 engaged in these raids. Before this a number of attacks made in conjunction with the unsuccessful offensive north of Lake Ladoga had almost destroyed prosperous Sortavala, where 17,000 people were rendered homeless by a fire that swept the wood-built town from end to end.

On February 2, the Russian attack on the Mannerheim position was renewed, after a month of reconnaissance by air and by patrols. Attacks were made on the Finnish left, but the main fury of the Red onslaught was directed on the right centre and right, and especially upon the Summa sector, where the ground was relatively open, and there were no natural obstacles. This time the Russians avoided previous mistakes. They had greatly strengthened their artillery, which is believed to have amounted to rather more than 200 mobile guns and 600 batteries of light and medium pieces. They had massed great quantities of ammunition, they employed well-trained infantry for the attack of the key positions, and they used their tanks with much more discretion than in December. The artillery fire was extremely heavy and well directed. The weight of shells hurled upon the Finnish positions daily is said to have exceeded that fired by the British guns during the great bombardment that preluded the Battle of the Somme.

For over a week the Finns held their ground. The Russian attacks were thrown back with heavy losses almost daily, although their infantry now showed greater skill, and "Molotov's coffins," i.e., armoured sledges pushed or pulled to close quarters by tanks, were freely used to bring the Russian machine-gunners to close quarters with the defence. But on February 13 the Russians made a breach in the first line of permanent



ANTI-AIRCRAFT SHARPshootERS IN FINLAND



defences at Summa. The problem of reliefs had become serious. The men who had been fighting literally all day and all night against ceaseless Russian attack, and under a continual and well-directed bombardment from the heaviest guns backed by scores of bombing aeroplanes, were becoming exhausted. The losses were mounting up. Having once made a breach in the line, the Russians widened it by the systematic use of their infantry and their 33-ton tanks. The Finns regained some ground by counter-attacks, but these were too costly to be continued. By February 15 the first position had been abandoned from Summa to the Gulf of Finland. The left held out behind the Vuoksi-Suvanto-Taipale barrier of lake and river against every attack, though the Russians attempted to outflank it over the ice of Ladoga, using motor sledges and even light tanks with disastrous results to themselves. The right was bent back.

It was bent farther back in the next week. The Russians followed up their success energetically. The frost enabled them to move up their heavy artillery quickly. Their numbers—they had at least twenty-seven divisions on the isthmus against the Finnish three—enabled them to relieve their troops frequently and to attack “all round the clock.”

As the Finnish right went back the coastal fort of Koivisto which had long kept the Russians from an advance along the shore of the Gulf of Finland was first endangered, then isolated by the retreat. On the night of February 26–27 the garrison, having put their guns out of action, escaped over the ice to Viipuri. On that day the Russians were at Kaislahti, about eight miles from Viipuri. The town was in danger. Finnish troops and civilians were constructing new works behind it. But if it should fall into Russian hands the enemy would only have won an empty shell, so ruthlessly had his long-

range guns and bombing aeroplanes ravaged the city

By this time some of the promised aid in aeroplanes, arms, and munitions had reached the Finns, and their aircraft were holding their own against the superior numbers of Russian machines. Up to February 11, 333 Russian aeroplanes had been brought down in Finnish territory, and 641 Russian tanks had been captured or destroyed. But help had come too late. Imposing official lists of the war material sent to Finland were published in London and Paris, but they did not say how much of it had reached the Finns or when. Finnish man-power was beginning to fail, although the morale of people and army remained unbroken. The German threat to support Russia militarily grew clearer. Norway and Sweden, "unconscious of their doom," emphasized their neutrality, and stood in the way of Western intervention. Yet it is hard to resist the conclusion that, had the British Government taken advantage of the League's decision of December 14 and intervened in the struggle while Germany, taken aback by the Russian Government's action, was still uncertain what to do, they might well have carried the Swedes and Norwegians with them. France would have followed such a lead. An opportunity was lost. The defeat of Finland and the German occupation of Southern Norway were made possible by our inaction in the face of intelligible Scandinavian obstruction.

The Bolshevik  
Terms

Peace negotiations were opened through the mediation of Sweden on March 10, and a treaty was signed on March 12. The terms finally accepted by Finland were considerably more severe than those originally offered them by Russia. The new frontier was roughly that created between Russia and Sweden after the peace of Unsikanpunkki in 1721. The Finns suffered the loss of the

Mannerheim Zone fortifications, important industrial, mining, and forested area, and the living space of 400,000 people. The terms were

#### ARTICLE 1

Hostilities between Finland and the U S S R shall be immediately concluded

#### ARTICLE 2

The frontier between the Republic of Finland and the U S S R shall follow a new boundary line by which shall be amalgamated with the territory of the U S S R the whole of the Karelian Isthmus with the city of Vupuri and Vupuri Bay with the islands thereof, the western and northern coast area of Lake Ladoga, with the towns of Kakisalmi and Sortavala and the church village of Suojärvi, a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland, the area east of Markajärvi, with the church village of Kuolajärvi, and parts of the Rybach.

#### ARTICLE 3

Both high contracting parties undertake each on its own behalf to refrain from all acts of aggression directed against each other, and undertake not to conclude any alliance or to become parties to any coalition directed against either of the high contracting parties

#### ARTICLE 4

The Republic of Finland agrees to lease to the Soviet Union for thirty years in consideration of an annual rent of eight million Finnish marks to be paid by the Soviet Union, the Cape of Hango and the surrounding waters within a radius of five nautical miles to the south and east, and three nautical miles to the west and north thereof, and a number of islands situated therein, in conformity with the map attached to the present treaty—for the establishment of a naval base capable of defending the access to the Gulf of Finland against attacks, whereby, for the defence of the naval base, the Soviet Union is



granted the right to maintain there, at its own expense, armed land and air force units of the necessary strength.

#### ARTICLE 5

The U S S R undertakes to withdraw its military forces from the Petsamo area, which the U S S R voluntarily ceded to Finland under the terms of the peace treaty of 1920

Finland undertakes, as provided in the peace treaty of 1920, not to maintain in the waters adjoining the Arctic coast belonging to it warships and other armed vessels, with the exception of armed vessels of less than one hundred tons, which Finland may maintain there without limit, and a maximum of fifteen war or other armed vessels, the tonnage of which may, in no case, exceed four hundred tons

Finland undertakes, as provided in the said treaty, not to maintain submarines and armed aircraft in the waters mentioned

Finland further undertakes, as provided in the said treaty, not to construct on this coast any naval harbours, naval bases, or naval repair yards, which are larger in size than is necessary for the said vessels and their armament

#### ARTICLE 6

The Soviet Union and its nationals, as provided in the treaty of 1920, are granted free right of transit via the Petsamo area to Norway, and vice versa from Norway, whereby the Soviet Union is granted the right to establish a consulate in the Petsamo area

Goods transported via the Petsamo area from the Soviet Union to Norway, likewise goods transported via the said area from Norway to the Soviet Union, shall be free of all inspection and control, with the exception of the control necessary for the organization of transit traffic, nor shall Customs duties or transit or other charges be imposed

Nationals of the Soviet Union who travel via the Petsamo area to Norway and from Norway back to the Soviet Union shall be entitled to unhindered passage with

passports issued by the due authorities of the Soviet Union

With due observance of the general provisions in force, unarmed aircraft of the Soviet Union shall be entitled to maintain air traffic between the Soviet Union and Norway via the Petsamo area

#### ARTICLE 7

The Government of Finland grants to the Soviet Union goods transit rights between the Soviet Union and Sweden, and for the development of this traffic by the shortest railway route the Soviet Union and Finland regard as necessary the construction, each on its own territory, and if possible in the course of the year 1940, of a railway connecting Kandalaksha with Kemijärvi

#### ARTICLE 8

With the entry into force of the present treaty, trade relations between the high contracting parties shall be renewed, and for this purpose the high contracting parties shall proceed to negotiate regarding the conclusion of a trade agreement

#### ARTICLE 9

This peace treaty shall enter into force immediately it has been signed, and shall later be ratified

The exchange of instruments of ratification shall take place within ten days at Moscow

On March 14 Field-Marshal Mannerheim issued his last order of the day the sad, simple truth of which was soon to be brought home to his immediate Scandinavian neighbours, but which was ultimately applicable to every single neutral Power, great or small, throughout the world

"Soldiers of Finland's glorious army ! Peace has been concluded between our country and Soviet Russia. It is a hard peace, giving Russia practically every battlefield on which you have shed your blood for all that you hold

dear and sacred You did not want war You loved peace, work, and progress But the fight was forced upon you, and the deeds you have performed will shine for centuries in the annals of history

"More than fifteen thousand of you who went out will not see your homes again, and how many are they who have not lost for ever their ability to work ! But you have hit back hard, and if two hundred thousand of the enemy now lie beneath the frozen snows or with sightless gaze contemplate our starry skies, the blame does not lie with you You did not hate them You wished them no harm You merely followed the stern law of war to kill or die

"Soldiers ! I have fought on many battlefields, but never yet have I seen your equals I am proud of you, just as if you were my own children, equally proud of him from the Northern Tundras, of him from the broad plains of East Bothnia, from the Karelian woods, from Savo's villages I am proud of those who come from the flourishing farms of Häme and Satakunta, of those from the whispering birchwoods of Uusimaa and Finland proper

"Despite all courage and the will to sacrifice, the Government has been forced to make a peace on hard terms This, nevertheless, has its explanation

"Our army, including reserves, was insufficient, we were not equipped for a war with a great Power While our brave soldiers were defending our frontier, it was necessary, with superhuman efforts, to make up the deficiencies, to create a line of defence which before did not exist, and to seek the help which did not arrive It was a question of getting arms and equipment, at a time when our country was feverishly preparing for the storm which is now sweeping over the world

"Your deeds have aroused admiration the whole world

over, but after three and a half months of war we still stand alone. We did not succeed in obtaining any foreign aid, except for two battalions reinforced by some artillery and aeroplanes, whilst our own troops, fighting day and night, without a chance of relief, stood up to the attacks of every new enemy formation till long past physical and moral breaking point.

"When at last the history of this war is written the world will see what deeds you have performed. Without the generous help of ammunition and equipment given by Sweden and the Western Powers we could not have withstood for so long the innumerable guns, tanks, and aeroplanes which were thrown against us. Unfortunately, the splendid promise of help given us by the Western Powers could not be fulfilled, owing to our neighbours' concern for their own safety. They refused the right of passage to the Allied troops. After sixteen weeks of fierce struggle, without resting day or night, our army stands to-day unbeaten by an enemy which, in spite of enormous losses, has only grown in numbers. Neither has our home front wavered, despite the innumerable air attacks which have spread death and terror among our women and children. Our towns, which have been burnt down, our villages lying far behind the front, even as far back as the western frontier, are a striking witness of what our people have had to undergo during the past months. It is a hard fate for us now that we have been obliged to give up to a race, which is foreign and of a different philosophy and moral standards, land which we tilled for centuries by the sweat of our brow.

"We will spare no effort to provide homes and better living conditions within the remaining territories for all those whose houses and property have been ruined. And we will be prepared, as before, to defend our diminished mother country with the same determination and

strength with which we fought for her undivided We have the proud knowledge that we have a historic mission to fulfil to protect the Western civilization which for centuries has been part of our heritage We also know that we have paid to the last penny the debt which we have owed to the West ”

## CHAPTER III

### ECONOMIC WARFARE

#### I CONTRABAND CONTROL

By the end of February 1940, the Contraband Committee<sup>1</sup> had considered the cases of about 2,700 British and neutral ships at control bases in the United Kingdom, in the Mediterranean, and at Aden. Attempts were occasionally made to run the blockade, but most were frustrated by our naval patrols. Contraband control could, of course, only be applied to Germany's overseas trade, but since, in 1938, over half her imports<sup>2</sup> were seaborne, there can be no doubt of their vital importance to her war effort. By March 8, over 1,100,000 tons of contraband had been ordered to be seized by the Allied Contraband Committees, of which the United Kingdom share was approximately half. Eighteen hundred tons of enemy exports had been discharged and placed in prize by the British Enemy Exports Committee, but the success of the blockade cannot be gauged by the amount of cargo actually seized. Much more important was the quantity of goods never shipped at all for a German destination for fear of the contraband control. This quantity could not be measured exactly, but it was becoming increasingly certain that, owing to the risks involved, the greater part of the normal overseas trade of Germany had ceased. In view of the frequent allegation that our blockade is an inhumane weapon in that

<sup>1</sup> Of which Lord Finlay was Chairman

<sup>2</sup> About 53 per cent. But according to a letter in the *Manchester Guardian*, of February 17, 1940: *Germany's overseas trade cut off by the blockade amounted to only 1,200,000,000 out of 5,200,000,000 marks, and this loss has been largely made good by an increase in her European exports*

it affects chiefly the civilian population, notably by "starving women and children," it may be pointed out that foodstuffs accounted for only 10 per cent of the cargoes seized, and that a good proportion of this percentage, particularly of the fats and oils, might have been converted into materials directly useful to the military machine

Germany had for a long time made elaborate advance arrangements for the evasion of our contraband control. Besides building up stocks of deficiency materials, and manufacturing substitutes, she had planned to continue her import trade through agents in neutral countries adjacent to Germany. The Contraband Committee, armed with information gathered from all parts of the world, was engaged in a constant battle of wits to frustrate these plans. A typical Nazi device for evading the control was the importing of large quantities of food, and small but valuable goods, such as industrial diamonds, in parcels and letters sent from neutral countries overseas. To counteract this traffic, neutral mails had to be detained for examination. The function of such examination, which is a recognized part of contraband control, is largely preventive, without it, there is little doubt that the traffic would attain a much greater volume.

By the second operation in the economic campaign, the control of Germany's overseas exports, instituted by the Order in Council of November 28 as a reprisal for the ruthless illegalities of her sea warfare, the Nazis were cut off from a very valuable source of foreign exchange. To mitigate the effect of the blow that the Order dealt to neutrals, its provisions were put into operation gradually and leniently,<sup>1</sup> but by the end of February it was

<sup>1</sup> The agreement made in March 1940 with the Italian Government on the shipment of German coal to Italy showed that H. M. Government had given full consideration to neutral rights, but would not in future forgo their own rights under the Reprisals Order.

beginning to take full effect. The important task of frustrating Nazi schemes for using neutral firms as exporting agents was entrusted to the Enemy Exports Committee.<sup>1</sup>

In order to facilitate trade between neutral countries, Certificates of Origin and Interest were issued for consignments outward bound from European countries when it could be shown that the cargo was at least 75 per cent of neutral origin. These certificates corresponded to the Navicerts issued for consignments from the United States, the Argentine, Brazil, and Uruguay to all European countries except Russia.<sup>2</sup>

To supplement the contraband control by restricting in so far as possible the flow of raw materials from neutral countries to Germany, War Trade Agreements were concluded with Sweden, Belgium, Greece, and Norway; and negotiations were proceeding with Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Spain. An Anglo-Italian Commission, set up in November, 1939, dealt with commercial problems, including those arising out of our Mediterranean Contraband Control. As a result of these agreements, Germany was faced with the problem of evading export restrictions imposed by neutral Governments through whose territories she was seeking to import contraband, and she was compelled to rely more and more for essential imports on the trans-Siberian Railway. These War Trade Agreements were not strictly comparable with the rationing agreements by which the imports of certain neutrals were limited in 1917-18. As observed in *The First Quarter*,<sup>3</sup> the number of Germany's neutral neighbours and the extent of their territory make it impossible for Britain to establish a complete blockade;

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding to the Contraband Committee

<sup>2</sup> See *The First Quarter*, p. 329. By the end of February 25,000 applications for Navicerts had been received.

<sup>3</sup> Page 326



but in at least one important respect the blockade instituted in 1939 was more efficacious than that of 1914. In the last war such essential war materials as cotton and rubber, although listed as conditional contraband, were imported quite freely through neutral territory into Germany until March, 1915. In the present war the military importance of such raw materials was fully recognized from the beginning, and most of the neutral countries concerned were prepared to give guarantees against their re-export to Germany.

During the period under review, the Allies carried their economic war into the markets of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. No easy victory could be expected there, since Germany was in a position to exercise at close quarters what is euphemistically known as economic pressure. Moreover, the Nazis had, before the war, established a very strong position in the economics of the Balkan countries, chiefly by long-term barter arrangements. The Allies therefore could not hope to end the German-Balkan commercial traffic, but by entering the markets against Germany they could at worst bid up prices, and at best deprive the enemy of valuable commodities. At the same time they could lessen the dependence of those countries on Germany. Besides bidding up the prices of the goods Germany requires they could beat down the price of those Germany sells—not only in the Balkans, but in Scandinavia, the Low Countries, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and even in Russia (where, it was legitimate to hope, Vodka-trained palates might be growing a little weary of Ribbentrop's recent flatter consignments).

It was discovered early in the year that some of Germany's northern neighbours were receiving far more lubricating oil than they needed. Since Germany was notoriously short of this commodity, American oil com-

panies were consequently informed by Britain that they would be refused Navicerts for cargoes destined for the Netherlands, Belgium, or Denmark, until enquiries to determine normal domestic consumption in these countries had been completed. But the fact that a European neutral's imports of any commodity were larger in the months succeeding September, 1939 than in the corresponding period of 1938 did not necessarily mean that she was exporting them to Germany. Holland, for instance, imported 32,000,000 lb more cotton in the first three months of the war than in September-November, 1938. The obvious inference was that the surplus went to Germany. In fact, however, Dutch statistics showed that no raw cotton whatever was exported to Germany between September, 1939 and the end of the year, and that, during the same period, re-exports of manufactured cotton were very small. Moreover, the total Dutch imports of 60,250 tons of cotton in 1939, compared with 62,850 tons in 1937, providing further evidence against the obvious conclusion.

The value of exports from the United States to European neutrals bordering on Germany<sup>1</sup> increased by about £18,000,000 during the first six months. Among the principal commodities were cotton, grains, oil, copper, iron and steel, and machinery. Swedish purchases in America increased by £5,000,000, Dutch by £4,250,000, Italian by £3,500,000, Norwegian by over £3,000,000, Swiss by £2,000,000. Swiss purchases were four times as large as a year before, Norwegian three times, and Italian twice.<sup>2</sup> What percentage of these increases were attributable to re-exports to Germany it was impossible to discover.

It was thought probable that some proportion of Russia's American purchases were reaching Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Italy, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, March 6, 1940

In January the Russians bought large quantities of heavy machinery in the United States, and Mr Cross stated in the House at the end of February that though Russian imports of war material, except from Germany, had been considerably reduced in recent months, imports of certain raw materials, including rubber, copper, and molybdenum, were larger during the period September to January than during the same period of 1937-38. These imports entered the Soviet Union at Vladivostock, and came from the U S A either direct or through Mexico, from the Philippines, and from the Netherlands East Indies. The ships employed were mainly Soviet, Dutch, Japanese, and Norwegian.

There can be no doubt that, under the energetic direction of Mr Cross, the Ministry of Economic Warfare did excellent work during the first six months, but there were many who felt, and said, that the Ministry received less consideration from the Government than its high importance demanded. Indeed, there seemed reason to suppose that in the beginning the Ministry of Economic Warfare was not regarded by the Government as anything more important than a *succursale*—a branch establishment—of the Foreign Office, evolved (it was said) to execute that high Department's cruder operations and liable to frequent intervention of a *Deus ex machina* type if such operations evoked too strong a protest from some irascible neutral.

According to one writer<sup>1</sup>, who, incidentally, paid high tribute to the Director-General, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross<sup>2</sup>, the Ministry's "work is being done in hopelessly unsuitable premises. Neutral statesmen who need to be

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, in *Time and Tide*, January 27, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> "He has that special merit of being able to work with big men and of attracting from them that team spirit which, when it really gets going, shows the British character at its best."

soothed have to be interviewed in a draughty corner of what was actually a cellar. Men doing important 'detective work' are jammed together three and five in tiny rooms that once sufficed for a lecturer to interview a student. Over all that now forms the Big Fourth of what was the Big Three Fighting Services hangs this air of crowded, casual, makeshift organization. One telegram decoded rapidly on the premises may save a 10,000-ton steamer and its lives and cargo. Another telegram quickly dealt with may mean the stoppage of supplies. But as yet there is not sufficient staff at M E W for these to be dealt with as promptly as is needed." The Ministry was at that time housed in the premises of the London School of Economics in Aldwych, but it was later moved to those spacious, air-conditioned cubes of brick known as Berkeley Square House.

Public confidence in our contraband measures was rudely shaken when it was learnt in February that nearly six months after the blockade had been instituted we were still permitting German coal to be transported by sea to Italy. In the light of this disclosure, Lord Chatfield's reference at Cardiff to the strangulation of Germany's coal-export trade by our blockade was not well received by the coal trade (which was also aware that German coal was going to the Baltic). It was obvious that this gaping hole in the blockade was due to anxiety on the part of the Foreign Office not to offend Italy, and there were many who felt that too much consideration had already been shown to that ambiguously non-belligerent Power. This feeling was strengthened when it became known that the Italians were reluctant to accept British coal in exchange for the products of their heavy industry, which were then going to Germany.

But Italy was also suspected of being non-belligerent in other ways

According to an American journalist<sup>1</sup>, "the British-owned Rio Tinto Company is still (January, 1940) forced by the Franco Government to supply the Nazis with 35,000 tons of copper ore per month" It was suggested that this copper was among other valuable commodities<sup>2</sup> transported to Germany by way of the Brenner Pass. The suggestion was the more readily accepted in America because Holland had protested that while we rationed her in copper we allowed Germany to receive large quantities through Italy, and it was rumoured in New York that the control officials at Gibraltar displayed partiality towards Italian shipping<sup>3</sup>. In reply to these rumours, Mr Cross stated in the House that the Rio Tinto Company had informed him that "at the present time (February, 1940) no copper ore is being exported from Spain, where it is all needed". Whether or no during the first five months of the war this had been so, Germany had, anyhow, at her back door the most productive copper mines in Europe, those of Jugoslavia,<sup>4</sup> from which source she could also draw bauxite, or aluminium ore<sup>5</sup>.

Much blockade discussion centred round iron ore and oil. It is worth while, therefore, briefly to discuss Germany's position regarding these commodities.

German oil consumption in 1936 was about 4,560,000 tons a year, of which only about 42 per cent was home-produced, so that the balance of 2,700,000 tons had to be imported to cover immediate requirements. Actually, more than 4,200,000 tons were imported, leaving something like 1,500,000 tons in reserve. By 1938 imports had

<sup>1</sup> Selwyn James, *New Republic*, January 22, 1940

<sup>2</sup> Including Spanish iron and mercury

<sup>3</sup> *New Statesman*, February 10, 1940

<sup>4</sup> In 1938 Jugoslavia produced 42.7 per cent of Europe's copper

<sup>5</sup> Also produced in Hungary, Greece and Romania

increased to nearly 5,000,000 tons<sup>1</sup>, while the oil-from-coal plant had been enormously extended. Even allowing for increased consumption, it is likely that by the middle of 1939 she had at least 3,000,000 tons in reserve. The oil-wells of the territories under her control yield about 1,000,000 tons a year and by 1940 she was probably producing 2,500,000 tons a year from coal.

The British contraband control deprived her of access to her greatest external sources of supply, Venezuela and the United States, but she could still draw between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 tons a year from Romania<sup>2</sup>, and an uncertain quantity from Russia. In 1939 Russia, the second greatest producer in the world, exported less than 1,000,000 tons, of which only 80,000 went to Germany. It was impossible to estimate the quantity that Russia might in time supply to Germany. As pointed out in *The First Quarter*<sup>3</sup>, there was the technical difficulty of transport and the political delicacy of the doubtful extent of Russia's desire to help the "bloody assassin of the workers." With regard to transport, probably only a small quantity of Russian oil would be transported by rail, the greater part would go from Baku, through pipe-lines to Batum, thence across the Black Sea to Odessa or Constanza and by rail and the Danube to Germany.<sup>4</sup>

In January, *Pravda's* Minsk correspondent reported that a system of canals was being constructed in Western White Russia so that oil could be transported by water all the way from Batum to Danzig. Nine dams, with eight locks, were being built to connect the River Pripiet,

<sup>1</sup> Between 1937 and 1939 imports from Mexico increased enormously. In 1937 353,000 tons were imported, in 1938 434,000, in the first six months of 1939 598,000 tons.

<sup>2</sup> Romanian oil is unsuitable for the manufacture of high-grade petrol, but the wells have a large output, 6,600,000 tons in 1938. <sup>3</sup> Page 342.

<sup>4</sup> Most of the Romanian oil sent to Germany in pre-war days was shipped from Constanza on the Black Sea to North Sea ports, instead of by rail, or by the Danube.

from near Pinsk, with the Bug beyond Brest-Litovsk. From that point not only the Bug but existing canals and the Vistula River would be used. The system was calculated to be ready for use in April, 1940.<sup>1</sup>

That a country at war should need more iron ore than the same country at peace would seem obvious but is not necessarily true, for according to the League of Nations' report on war materials, iron production actually decreased during the last war. Why this was so is not quite clear, partly, doubtless, because in war-time much constructive work requiring the use of iron is abandoned and because more use is made of scrap iron. It is estimated that one year's output of the Swedish Lapland mines would keep the world's armament manufacturers going at full pressure for several years. For these reasons Germany's enormous peace-time demands on overseas supplies of iron ore<sup>2</sup> must not be taken to indicate that were she to be cut off from them in war-time her armaments industry would be immediately crippled. At the same time it was greatly to be desired that she should be deprived of them, and so ultimately of her capacity to export the products of heavy industry to her neutral neighbours.

Germany's principal foreign source of iron ore was Sweden, from whom she bought 9,000,000 tons in 1938<sup>3</sup> some 7,000,000 tons from Lapland and 2,000,000 tons from the central Swedish ironfields. Part of the Lapland ore was shipped from Narvik in Norway<sup>4</sup>, part from Lulea<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 11, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> In 1938 she produced 22,000,000 tons of steel, while the output of her own ore mines was only 11,000,000 tons.

<sup>3</sup> British imports from Sweden amounted to 1,650,000 tons in the same year.

<sup>4</sup> The Minister of Economic War stated that in the three months December–February, 1939–1940, 478,058 tons of Swedish iron ore were shipped along the coast of Norway to Germany. The figure for the corresponding period of 1938–39 was 1,286,181 tons.

<sup>5</sup> Lulea is ice-bound for seven months of the year, but in the five ice-free months the port can handle 5,000,000 tons of ore.

in the Gulf of Bothnia. The traffic was still going on at the end of February, and there did not then seem much prospect of putting an end to it.

## 2 BRITISH EXPORT TRADE

When, early in January, Field-Marshal Goring was made supreme director of the entire war industry of Germany, some Allied newspapers informed their readers that this was a desperate step to which Hitler had been driven by the success of the Allied blockade. Persons less easily encouraged were rather inclined to reason that the appointment as economic dictator of the second man in Germany was evidence of the seriousness with which the Nazis regarded the economic arm. The British Cabinet had as yet given no such proof of their awareness of the incalculable importance of this arm. The position in Britain seemed to be that "a General Staff has been created but not a General, and, without denying for a moment the indispensability of the staff, it is likely that in the long run a General will prove to be equally indispensable."<sup>1</sup>

In the period under review great dissatisfaction was expressed by business men and by the Press at the alleged inadequacy of the Government's machinery for the control of the economic side of the war and for the co-ordination of the various departments and agencies concerned. For some time before September, 1939, Lord Stamp had been more or less unofficially advising the Government on economic matters and in October he was formally appointed Advisor on Economic Co-ordination.<sup>2</sup> He was also made president of two of the three committees in economic matters which the Government set up: the

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, February 2, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time he retained his chairmanship of the L.M.S. Railway



Economic Survey, consisting of economists, and the Inter-departmental Committee, consisting of the permanent heads of the Departments dealing with industry and trade. The work of these bodies was brought before the War Cabinet through a Ministerial Committee. Since the Chancellor of the Exchequer was chairman of this Committee the Prime Minister was able to claim that economic interests were sufficiently represented in the Cabinet. There were many who thought, however, that Sir John Simon was already too crucially occupied with purely financial questions to be able to give much attention to broader economic questions.<sup>1</sup>

On February 1, Mr Chamberlain rejected a joint Opposition demand for the appointment to the War Cabinet of a Minister specially charged with the planning of the nation's resources for the prosecution of the war, defending his decision in a speech which convinced few that had not previously shared his opinion. Mr Amery expressed the general feeling of the Opposition and of many members of his own Party when he said, after the Premier had spoken: "Some of us, at any rate, feel that we are still in substance living under the same general kind of organization as we were in time of peace, under an organization which militates against foresight and broad perspective, clear planning, and

<sup>1</sup> "Without disparaging these Committees, which are not and never will be superfluous, can it really be said that they give co-ordination or the means of quick and decisive action in any way comparable with the present organization of the fighting Services working with the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence? And without disparaging the Chancellor of the Exchequer, can it really be said that he can double the office with the duties of a Minister of Economic Co-ordination? No man could possibly find the time to do so.

"The fact is that there is no Minister to-day holding a position comparable, for instance, with that of Lord Milner during the last War—a position which all who remember that time will agree to have been indispensable"—*The Times*, December 14, 1939

prompt and decisive execution, a system which tends not to act in time ”

Though refusing to yield over the main issue, Mr Chamberlain announced the formation of an Export Council which was to have Sir Andrew Duncan as chairman, and Mr R S Hudson, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, as vice-chairman Lord Stamp was, naturally, a member There were representatives of the Treasury, the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the Foreign Office, as well as of the Trade Unions and of business Some leading business men were giving their full-time services to the Council without remuneration The Council aims at promoting the greatest volume of export trade which can be achieved under war conditions According to a statement issued in March as a White Paper, their duty is to ensure that every agency concerned, whether Government Department, manufacturer, or exporter, makes every effort to attain this objective, and they will recommend any measures which they find necessary or desirable

The maintenance of export trade is so vital a factor in the war effort of the Allied Powers that no measure calculated to contribute to the end in view should be excluded from consideration Nevertheless, there are powerful reasons why the strongest preference should be given to measures which involve least interference with the existing channels of trade or with established practices or principles It is essential that under war conditions exporters should receive direction, guidance, and support from the central Government to a degree never contemplated under peace conditions If export trades, including both manufacturers and merchants, are organized or will organize themselves so as to make it possible for them to work with the Export Council in securing the necessary

adjustments in the war-time machinery of trade and so as to profit effectively from the direction, guidance, and support which the Government are ready to give, the general situation internally and externally was such that the Council were confident that a substantial increase of exports could be achieved. Should exceptional circumstances arise in particular trades or over the whole field, the Council place no limit to the expedients they would be prepared to consider. The Council had at its disposal the services of the Industrial Supplies Department of the Board of Trade, which had been set up to ensure fair distribution of supplies as between the Services, the export trade and the home market.

While the creation of the Export Council was everywhere welcomed, great disappointment was expressed in the country and in the Press that its chairman was not a member of the War Cabinet. Chambers of Commerce and other commercial bodies had long been pressing for the inclusion in the Cabinet of a Minister representing industry, and particularly the export trade. In February the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a body which represents the most important exporting centre in the country, unanimously urged the Government to appoint a Minister "to a seat in the War Cabinet who shall be primarily concerned with the war-time requirements of trade and industry, including especially the maximum extension of export trade."

In moving the resolution, Sir John Barton pointed out that they wanted in the Cabinet a Minister to represent industry, who had the right to be there, not only when his opinions were sought<sup>1</sup>. The chairman of the India Section said that representatives of the Chamber had had numerous interviews in London and all had come

<sup>1</sup> The Chairman of the Export Council was to be summoned to attend the Cabinet from time to time

back with the same impression—that a great deal of lip service was being paid to the necessity of exports, but that in point of fact the export trade had to run the gauntlet of the Services and had to give place to requirements of less importance—for example, the demand for uniforms for people not in important national service, who could at least wait <sup>1</sup>

Among the important bodies supporting the Chamber's resolution was the Cotton Trade Merchant's Association, whose Council wrote to the Prime Minister that the country's export trade was in a desperate plight—"much worse than can be gauged from any official export trade returns—partly because of the conflict between various Government departments the Board of Trade, the Department of Overseas Trade, the Ministry of Supply, and the Ministry of Economic Warfare" They pressed "for the granting to one of His Majesty's Ministers of the powers necessary to control and to co-ordinate the activities of the various Ministries which view our trade from different standpoints and with different immediate objectives We take the liberty of suggesting that these great and overriding powers be granted to the President of the Board of Trade" The only reply the chairman of the council received from Mr Chamberlain's secretary was a marked copy of the issue of *Hansard* which recorded the Prime Minister's decision to set up an Export Advisory Council <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Manchester Chamber of Commerce is a body extremely well disposed towards the Government, and ready, often over-ready, to accept official assurances at their face value."—*Manchester Guardian*, February 13, 1940

The author quotes this testimonial to the Chamber's orthodoxy, lest the remarks of its members might lead readers to imagine it to be over inspired by the doctrine and literature of the Manchester school

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, February 14, 1940

The foreign trade figures for December were fairly good. Exports, at £40,200,000, showed an increase of 7 per cent, imports, at £86,600,000, 3 per cent, on November, both were larger than in December, 1938. In January exports were £41,100,000 and imports £105,000,000. These figures were not discouraging, but the fact that the balance of trade, the difference between imports and exports, showed a worsening of 41 per cent was a measure of the colossal task that lay ahead of exporters. At the same time, the increase in our imports made an expansion of exports easier because it increased the purchasing power of overseas buyers.

The problem of increasing exports is closely linked with that of keeping down the cost of living.<sup>1</sup> The price of exports depends mainly on the wage-level: if wages rise to meet a rising cost of living, the prices of exportable goods also rise and the chances of selling them grow smaller. In the Four Years' War the Government's failure to keep the cost of living down lost millions of customers to British manufacturers, and the effects of this loss were still being felt twenty years after

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The year 1938 was one of the worst the cotton trade had ever known. It was even then still suffering from the effects of 1914-18, when lack of imaginative planning to meet war conditions completely dislocated it. In order to avoid the mistakes of twenty-five years ago the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Supply jointly set up a Cotton Board with an Export Trade Committee. Sir Percy Ashley was appointed Cotton Controller, and Mr Frank Platt Deputy Controller. In January the Board issued an order fixing yarn prices, since price stability is essential if overseas markets are to be developed. At the same time arrangements were made for the collection of

<sup>1</sup> See pp 187-90

a levy on raw cotton to finance technical and commercial research and publicity campaigns. Cotton exporters were faced with the problem of greatly increased production costs. In some markets customers paid the increased price "without much complaint, but India and Egypt have bought very little at the higher prices, and Malaya, West Africa, South America, Northern Europe, and the Dominions may not continue to buy on the same scale if the advances persist"<sup>1</sup>. To meet this difficulty the Board was considering price concessions for export business.

During the first eight months of 1939 the wool export trade was steadily regaining the ground it had lost during the slump of 1938. When war came the industry was immediately put under Government control. Prices were to be limited to approximately the pre-war level, and rationing of supplies to mills was enforced in November. At first the demands of the Services prevented the industry from attending to either civilian or export business. There was a general realization in the trade of the necessity of keeping up exports of wool textiles even though this meant a refusal of domestic orders, and in January the Government, acting under pressure from the trade, arranged that any wool exported in the form of cloth or apparel would be replaced in full, plus an extra allowance of 25 per cent of the quantity exported. This meant in effect that there was to be no rationing of wool for export purposes. The arrangement was calculated to induce a scarcity of cloth and clothes, and consequently a rise in prices, in the home market, but it was welcomed in the interests of the overseas market. Revision of the maximum price schedules for both home and export trade was not so well received. The maximum prices schedule of September had given the impression that prices would be

Export  
Wool

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian, Annual Business Review*, January 30, 1940

kept down, "but in October the home issue price of a 64's warp top, which will serve as an example, was raised from 26½d to 31¾d. When an export issue price of 43d for the same commodity was announced there was sharp criticism of the discrepancy. When the announcement of January 4 put the home issue price up, as from March 1, to 42½d—an advance of 10¾d at one step—the trade was reported to be 'staggered' by the extent of the rise. Whatever the explanation, the price of this top was raised by the Control from 26½d to 42½d in a period of six months, a proceeding which many found difficult to reconcile with the oft-repeated Government declaration that every effort was being made to prevent steep rises in prices. Wages in the industry are to move up with the cost of living. Dearer wool goods are likely to contribute to an increase in the cost of everybody's living."<sup>1</sup>

Government control of the cotton industry caused, not surprisingly, a good deal of misgiving among manufacturers, merchants and brokers. "They feared," wrote Mr Shimmin, that "the war may submerge private enterprise in State Socialism." The same authority is of the opinion that the existence of perplexity about the effects of control is "evidence that the economic impact of war has been less closely thought out by the Government than its military and naval prosecution." A statement with which few would venture to quarrel.

ports —  
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Britain's steel-producing capacity has expanded from under 8,000,000 tons a year in 1914 to over 14,000,000 in 1940,<sup>2</sup> and to maintain ingot output above eight or nine million tons a year the industry has to import enormous quantities of scrap metal. The whole of the present output of steel could easily be consumed at home. Export

<sup>1</sup> Arnold N. Shimmin, *Manchester Guardian, Annual Business Review*, January 30, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Germany's steel production in 1938 was 23,000,000 tons.

was consequently neglected until the principle of earmarking a block tonnage of steel for export was adopted, enabling Britain to obtain foreign exchange and to keep up overseas trade connections. In 1914, when all the Belgian and the greater part of the French steelworks were in enemy hands, the United States was the only big supply market for the British finishing mills. In February, 1940 the 10,000,000-ton French industry was intact and both Belgium and Luxemburg were in a position to supply the Allies. The British steel position was further strengthened by Dominion output, which was in the neighbourhood of 4,000,000 tons.<sup>1</sup>

In December the value of machinery and electrical goods exported amounted to £3,500,000, despite the enormous demands of the Services. Exports of hardware and tools were greater than in December, 1938. Motor-car exports increased considerably. On every working day in November 300 cars left our ports for overseas markets, an increase of 26 per cent on November, 1938. In September–November motor-car exports to Australia, India and Burma, Portugal and Uruguay were the greatest in the history of the industry.

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian, Annual Business Review*, January 30, 1940





*Part Two*

*The Home Front*



## CHAPTER IV

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### I THE GOVERNMENT

Then each to each applied the fatal knife,  
Deep questioning

MEREDITH

On the night of January 5 it was unexpectedly announced that Mr Hore-Belisha and Lord Macmillan had resigned and that their places had been taken by Mr Oliver Stanley and Sir John Reith, and that after the ex-War Minister had declined the Presidency of the Board of Trade, this office was accepted by Sir Andrew Duncan

In a letter to Mr Chamberlain, Mr Hore-Belisha wrote "I wish I had felt able to accept the important office which you have been good enough to offer me in your reconstructed Government, but for the reasons I gave you verbally this morning, I regretfully cannot see my way to do so" Mr Chamberlain, in his reply, expressed his great regret at Mr Hore-Belisha's decision and went on to pay "my sincere tribute to your work at the War Office and to the important reforms you have carried out" The correspondence made it clear that there had been no difference on policy between the two Ministers Mr Hore-Belisha had been in office since the first National Government was formed in 1931, and had been War Minister since May, 1937 The sudden entirely unforeseen and completely unexplained dismissal of one of the best-known figures in the Cabinet came as something more, and worse, than a surprise to Press and

public As the New York *Herald-Tribune* put it "This shock Chamberlain managed to administer in such a way as to give rise to the maximum dramatic suspicion" The Prime Minister made a statement to Parliament the following week, but his explanation left the mystery unexplained he had "become aware of difficulties arising out of the ex-War Minister's very great qualities"—a phrase which was taken to mean that Mr Hore-Belisha had been unfortunate in his personal relationships with "the Generals" at the War Office The ex-Minister's own extremely restrained statement was civilly rather than sympathetically received by a puzzled House

Mr Hore-Belisha had always been more popular with the public than with any section in the House His staggering post-Munich confession of the deficiencies of Army supply had not been forgotten, nor had his supposed assault upon Members' privileges at the time of the Sandys affair The Labour Party, who might have been expected to defend him as the instrument of the democratization of the Army, and particularly the Opposition Liberals, had never forgiven him for the part he had played in the formation of the first National Government Mr Attlee sharply rebuked that part of the Press that had hysterically written up Mr Hore-Belisha's dismissal as a major crisis, and said that his Party was not prepared to line up behind a newspaper campaign It had been suggested in the Press that the War Minister had been dismissed (a) because "the Generals" objected to his programme of reforms, (b) because he was a young man, (c) because he was a Jew, (d) because he was a "democrat" For the first theory—since some of the Generals were where they were because of the reforms—it seemed hardly likely that they would object to them, save perhaps that of promotion from the ranks, which he was said to have

“overdone” For the second, Mr Stanley, his successor, was three years younger The third and the fourth would seem hardly to deserve serious consideration

Two newspapers, the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Express*, had carried advertisements reading “We must have Hore-Belisha”<sup>1</sup> Their authorship was unknown, but they gravely and ultimately prejudiced his cause in Parliament and with the public

Mr Oliver Stanley, the new Secretary of State for War, was the son of Lord Derby and he succeeded to an office which was held by his father during the last War, from 1916 to 1918, and again from 1922 to 1924 Mr Stanley first held Government office in 1931, when he was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Home Office From 1933 to 1934 he was Minister of Transport, and he was successively Minister of Labour and President of the Board of Education before becoming President of the Board of Trade in 1937 He had served in the last War with the Royal Field Artillery, in which he held the rank of major, had been mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre

When he first succeeded Mr Hore-Belisha doubt was felt as to how far he was of sufficient calibre for the task before him His personal charm, coupled with his undoubted abilities, rendered him a popular and respected figure in the House Yet, although always lucid and often patient, he did not possess that force and continuity of debating power which makes a great parliamentary personality

Sir Andrew Duncan, the new President of the Board of Trade, had a thorough understanding of the problems of industry and the special difficulties of the export trade

<sup>1</sup> They recalled the What-Price-Churchill advertisements of pre-War days

Soon after the outbreak of war he was appointed Controller of Iron and Steel under the Ministry of Supply, and later Chairman of the Committee of Control of the Ministry's Council of Supply. Since 1934 he had been chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Iron and Steel Federation. Before then he had been for about seven years chairman of the Central Electricity Board, and he was largely responsible for the carrying through of the national grid scheme. He was also a director of the Bank of England. His appointment to the Board of Trade was widely welcomed: indeed, no selection could have given greater satisfaction to business, and particularly to exporting interests. By the end of February, Sir Andrew Duncan had maintained and enhanced his initial impression alike upon the House, the Civil Service, and the Press.

The resignation of Lord Macmillan was not unexpected. He had made a gallant attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the Ministry of Information,<sup>1</sup> but he had always been under the disability of being unable to answer criticism personally in the House of Commons. The necessity for having a Minister of Information with a seat in the House of Commons, cited in the farewell correspondence between the Prime Minister and Lord Macmillan, had apparently been overlooked on his original appointment. Mr Chamberlain expressed his gratitude for the efforts he had made "to improve the organization and effectiveness of the Ministry," which had "gone far to remove the defects which were perhaps inevitable in setting up a new and complicated machine in the shortest possible time."

The choice of his successor was unexpected, it having been rumoured that Sir Walter Monckton, Director-General of the Press and Censorship Bureau, might

<sup>1</sup> See *The First Quarter*, pp. 208-12

become Minister in a reconstructed Government Sir John Reith had been the first general manager of the B B C , and from 1927 to 1938 Director-General of the Corporation He resigned this post to become chairman of Imperial Airways After the outbreak of war he was made chairman of the new British Overseas Airways Corporation His qualities as a strong-arm administrator were well known, but he was not very popular with certain sections of the Press, to whom his aloofness and austerities had not altogether commended themselves The general expectation was that he would anyhow "tune up" the Ministry Nevertheless, the running fire of hostile criticism continued unabated, and in the general opinion not unjustified, against the services of information, censorship and propaganda

## 2 THE OPPOSITION

In February, the National Executive of the Labour <sup>Labt</sup> <sup>Part</sup> Party issued a statement of policy in which, though declaring their combined "opposition to the Chamberlain Government," they called upon "the British people to contribute their utmost effort to the overthrow of the Hitler system in Germany This overthrow is essential to the achievement of Labour's programme of social justice, the maintenance and extension of democratic liberties, and the building of a peaceful commonwealth of free peoples

"Britain in the past has led the world in the development of Parliamentary democracy and civil freedom If these precious gains are not now to perish, it is imperative to break the evil power of totalitarian tyranny in Europe The Labour Party, therefore, unreservedly supports the Allied war of resistance to Nazi aggression because, though loathing war, it regards this war as a lesser evil than the slavery which finally would be the only alternative "



Victory was the immediate task

"But before the peoples are still further estranged by hatred and suffering, a lasting and just peace may be brought nearer by stating clearly now what our immediate war purpose is and what should be the principles and methods of the final settlement

"Discussion of territorial details is out of place at present, but a statement of the broad lines of settlement may be useful and opportune now. Moreover, if it is brought to the knowledge of the German people that they can have an honourable peace under fair conditions, this might contribute to a shortening of the war."

At the same time the Labour Party was

"convinced that the Allies ought not to enter into peace negotiations except with a German Government which has not merely promised but actually performed certain acts of restitution. In view of the experience of recent years, no one can trust a Nazi Government honestly to perform such acts or to abstain from future aggression

"Restitution must include freedom for the Polish and Czecho-Slovak peoples. No promise of independence for these peoples will suffice unless accompanied by the withdrawal of the German forces and police."

It was obvious from this statement that despite its theoretical opposition to the National Government, the Labour Party's immediate external aims were for practical purposes identical with those of Mr Chamberlain. Indeed, early in January, 1940, Mr C. R. Attlee, Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition, told the French newspaper, *Intransigeant*, that the sole aim of his party was to help Mr Chamberlain in the conduct of the war and to make all the forces of labour in Great Britain and the Dominions stand up against German barbarism. It was Labour's object to re-establish respect for international law

"We believe that the democracies have staked their existence in this struggle, which is above all a defence of human freedom against the German menace"

He gave it as his opinion that the Allies should send help to Finland in accordance with the decision taken at Geneva. Indeed, from the outset of the campaign, the Labour Party had been deeply stirred by Finland's gallant resistance to unprovoked aggression, and in January the National Council of Labour accepted an invitation from the Trade Union and Labour Movements of Finland to send representatives to examine the situation there.

There was a good deal of discontent among the Labour rank and file at the continuance of the electoral truce. In the House of Commons Labour members opposed the Government on old-age pensions, dependants' allowances, agriculture, rationing, and other questions, but the man in the street showed little interest in Parliamentary debates, and because of the absence of Labour opposition to the Government at by-elections he took it for granted that Labour was so much in agreement with Mr Chamberlain's policy that it had no desire to form an alternative Government—that it had, in fact, ceased to be in opposition and might just as well give up the pretence of being so. The general public had the impression that the only real opposition in the country came from the extremist parties and from Lord Haw-Haw.

The Trades Unions expressed bitter disappointment at <sup>T U C</sup> the Prime Minister's flat refusal to consider during the war any amendment of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927. They resented the implication that the Unions were on a kind of probation during the war and that in their behaviour would depend the Government's post-war attitude to the Act. It was pointed out

that the question of amendment had not arisen since the war but had been repeatedly pressed before, and that the Prime Minister was, in fact, replying to representations made as far back as February, 1939

Seeing that since September the Unions had loyally co-operated with the Government, and had done even more than was expected of them to prevent industrial friction of any kind, Mr Chamberlain's brusque handling of this delicate matter caused considerable surprise outside Transport House

Liberal  
Party

The Liberal Party, "dynamically" led by Sir Archibald Sinclair, continued their wholehearted support of the war effort and their demands for its more vigorous prosecution

Comm-  
unist  
Party

Surprisingly, there was no change in the policy of the Communist Party during the second quarter. It followed the Stalinist line regarding Finland, and continued to demand that an end should be put to the spread-the-war plans of Chamberlain and Daladier. Communist candidates contested the by-elections at Stretford and Silvertown, losing the deposit in both constituencies. Silvertown was fought by Mr Harry Pollitt, the most forceful and respected figure in the Party. The fact that he was unable to capture more than 966 votes in a notoriously revolutionary area demonstrated the hollowness of the Communist claim to represent the proletariat.

British  
Fascists

Sir Oswald Mosley's Fascists were not much in the public eye during the second three months, but they were not inactive. They laboured industriously to foster anti-Semitic and anti-war feeling. Their propagandists were not infrequently to be found in public-houses explaining that all our troubles, including the war, were caused by

the unspeakable Jew Much play was made of the fact that Mr Oliver Stanley's immediate predecessor at the War Office was a Jew "The Jews liked the war because they were making immense fortunes out of the feeding, clothing and arming of the Forces" Unfortunately this peculiarly revolting propaganda did sometimes find empty, and therefore receptive, minds At a public meeting in Manchester the Leader of the British Union (of Fascists) declared in impassioned tones that the war was being fought for the dominion of international Jewish finance It was untrue to say that Britain was fighting for her life, she could bring the war to an end to-morrow if she liked with her Empire intact and her people safe She had no interest whatever in the cast of Europe

In February a member of the Union fought the Silver-town by-election, securing 151 votes and, like the Communists, forfeiting his deposit Two members of the British Union were in January sentenced to terms of imprisonment on charges under the Emergency Powers Regulations relating to "information which would be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy"

The Pacifist movement, represented by a handful of **Pacifists** Labour and I L P members in the House and by the Peace Pledge Union and affiliated organizations outside Parliament, continued its activities throughout the second quarter, but did not appear to have gained much ground The percentage of men registering as conscientious objectors in December was 21.4, and in February 198 The total number of men who had claimed registration as conscientious objectors since the introduction of conscription was 21,349 Up to February 24 about 8,300 cases had been heard by local tribunals, of which 1,078 were registered as conscientious objectors unconditionally, 3,738 were registered on condition that

they undertook civil work, 2,040 were registered for non-combatant duties in the Armed Forces, and 1,479 were removed from the register of conscientious objectors

In the Stretford by-election in December the combined anti-war vote was under 6,000, against 23,400

### 3 CIVIL DEFENCE

In civil defence matters the period under review was perhaps mainly remarkable for a fierce newspaper campaign, directed towards the relaxation of the black-out regulations and capitalizing the discomforts, irritations and handicaps of an absence of artificial light during the three darkest months of the worst winter on record. Despite its vehemence, the campaign did remarkably little to shake the public's conviction that in this matter it were better to attach more importance to the statements of responsible Ministers than to those of evening newspaper columnists. On January 19 a daily newspaper with a 2,500,000 circulation reported that "a resolution of protest against black-out restrictions on business was telegraphed to Sir John Anderson by shopkeepers in Islington, North London after a meeting at the Central Library, Holloway Road". One might have supposed from this that Islington was seething with anti-black-out indignation, for the report omitted to state the numbers present, or that the motion of protest was carried by 14 votes to 3<sup>1</sup>. In December the chairman of a much-advertised public meeting, arranged by an evening newspaper, declared that it was intolerable that "forty million citizens with *Magna Charta* and *Habeas Corpus* behind them should be groping their way through a black-out". But by no means all the attacks on the regulations were equally puerile. The black-out did very

<sup>1</sup> *New Statesman*, January 27, 1940

seriously interfere with many branches of industry and caused an appalling number of road deaths

Sir Ralph Wedgwood, Chairman of the Railway Executive Committee, declared in an article in the *Evening Standard*<sup>1</sup> that the greatest obstacle in the way of the railwaymen's efforts to run trains to schedule, "the one thing which the most efficient railway official can never hope to remove by his own efforts—is the black-out

Under black-out conditions a heavy suburban train will take four times as long to fill or to empty as in daylight. An allowance of twenty or thirty seconds per stop, which is enough for a 5 p.m. train in October or March, is quite insufficient in December or January. Yet the time-table cannot be altered month by month. So it comes about that, during the short days, a suburban train will lose a minute or two minutes at each station as it stops to set down and pick up passengers. The more time it loses the more it interferes with other trains—main line or outer suburban—the delays are multiplied." In a forceful editorial on this article, the black-out was described as the Arch Fiend. "Every minute of its operation it inflicts a savage cut on production chiefly by this means of delayed transport. One high authority

has reckoned that the loss of production in some cases amounts to as much as 60 per cent. All industries

have to grapple with a permanent gigantic general strike." It was admitted that there was still a danger of air-raids but it was urged that the diminished risk should be balanced against the "certain dead loss we are now suffering." "And even if there was a case for London continuing to be cautious, what about Cardiff? Down in South Wales you can see great steel furnaces which light up the countryside for miles around. Beneath the blaze which they paint across the heavens you can be sure that

<sup>1</sup> January 11, 1940

chinks in the windows are denounced by Air Raid Wardens ”

In the first four months of the war, despite the greatly reduced number of cars in commission and the reduced mileage of those remaining, the number of deaths from road accidents (2,647) was 117 per cent over the corresponding period of 1938. Taking account only of adult pedestrians the percentage figure rose to 148. Accidents were least frequent during the period of the full moon. Graphs of the phases of the moon and the accident figures corresponded closely—conclusive proof that the black-out was the main cause of the increase.

In December there were 1,155 deaths on the roads, 895 of them during the black-out<sup>1</sup>. In addition, at least 30,000 people were injured. These were by far the worst figures for any month since returns have been made. The number of persons killed on the roads in January 1940 was 619, a reduction of 536 on the figure for the preceding month, but an increase of 134, or about 28 per cent, over the total for January, 1939. 461 of the fatal accidents took place during the hours of darkness, 158 during daylight. The lowness of the January figure as compared with that of December was mainly due to the reduction in the number of persons and vehicles using the roads brought about by severe weather and heavy snow in January.

Motorists were obliged after January 22 to use head-lamp masks of an approved type, and on February 1 a speed limit of 20 miles an hour had to be observed in built-up areas during black-out hours. In February, 1940, the number of deaths was 416, an astonishingly low figure, since it represented a decrease of just over 10 per cent on the figure for February, 1939. It was the first

<sup>1</sup> In September, 1939, there were 1130 killed on the roads, in October, 919, and in November, 926.

occasion since the outbreak of war on which the monthly returns for road deaths fell below those for February, 1939. The number of daylight accidents remained almost the same as for January, but there was a reduction of nearly 200 killed in the hours of darkness.

The Ministry of Transport was unable to determine "how much of this decrease is to be attributed (1) to the new 20 miles an hour speed limit in built-up areas during darkness, (2) to Press, broadcast and other warnings as to the need of care in the use of roads during the black-out, (3) to snow and ice which undoubtedly reduced road traffic in the earlier part of the month, or (4) to the reinstatement of summer time on February 25, which added an hour of daylight at a time when traffic is normally heavy." Among road-safety measures proposed but not introduced were the studding of the roads with cat's-eyes as a more efficacious and less expensive alternative to white lines<sup>1</sup>, and the illumination of motor-car number-plates so that the police would have less difficulty in establishing the identity of those responsible for road accidents.

Although the daily mileage of civilian motor-drivers in December, 1939, could hardly have exceeded a quarter of the September figure, there were more than twelve times as many prosecutions of motorists for lighting offences in December than in the first month of the war, and more than six times as many as in November. This steep rise in prosecutions was mainly due to increasing carelessness on the part of drivers, though partly to stricter watch by the police, and longer nights of darkness. There was also a considerable rise, albeit less steep, in the number of convictions for speeding. Seventy per cent of the

<sup>1</sup> "It costs £16 to white-line 1,000 yards of road. It would cost £50 to lay cat's-eyes at 5-yard intervals for a similar distance. But whereas the white lines must be repainted four times a year, the cat's-eyes are guaranteed for four years."—*New Statesman*, January 20, 1940.



speeding offences took place in the last hour of daylight when motorists were hurrying home

In defending the black-out regulations in the House,<sup>1</sup> Sir John Anderson said that their merits or demerits "should not be measured primarily in terms of danger to life and limb *The black-out was designed to prevent accurate navigation, to prevent the bomber from finding his target, to prevent aimed bombing, if and when the bomber found his target, and to render, so far as possible, unaimed bombing so haphazard and random that it had little effect* Whatever might be thought of the effect of the black-out in producing casualties, there were certain vital military places, the destruction of which might produce consequences of the greatest gravity, and the preservation of those places against attack must be the primary and the dominant consideration Lighting which could be identified by aircraft might provide the enemy with the means of launching an attack unexpectedly on the country, the consequences of which would be little short of disastrous By the black-out arrangements they had effectively protected the country against that major risk It was most dangerous for the public to assume that, because no air attack had so far developed, there was going to be no air attack "

Towards the end of December, 1939, an emergency street lighting system which gave an illumination about one-thousandth as bright as good pre-war lighting was tried in some of the main thoroughfares in West Central London Its use was approved by the Ministry of Home Security in the greater part of the country, with the exception of a twelve-mile-wide ribbon round the east and south coasts from Wick to Southampton, but as there were some 1,250,000 street lamps in Britain, it would take some time to apply the new system The

<sup>1</sup> January 23, 1940

modified, or starlight, lighting, besides helping to reduce the road casualty rate, has the important advantage that it can be kept on during air raids. By this time the interior lighting of buses and trolley-buses was sufficiently improved to enable passengers to read, and the use of ingeniously contrived shades prevented the light from penetrating to the streets.

In January the Air Ministry's aeroplane observers reported that London's black-out was sufficiently effective to have prevented enemy raiders from singling out particular objectives. To black the capital out completely was, of course, impossible. From the air it presented the appearance of a "dark sky sprinkled with stars—made by cars and torches—and flashes made by electric railways." The railway marshalling yards were very conspicuous, according to one observer, "diamond necklaces scattered about." On the other hand, railway signal lights could not be detected from any great height.

The non-appearance of bombers over our cities and the trust which our people rightly reposed in our defence organization led some to believe that the bombers would never be able to get through, and that therefore it was not really necessary to observe the A.R.P. regulations. Such complacency was, of course, quite unjustified. Experts computed that we could hardly hope to bring down more than 70 per cent of a raiding force before they had dropped their bombs. On the other hand, it was generally felt that air attacks on our cities would be a sign that the enemy was in desperation. "Slaughter of civilians from the air has only taken place, and is only likely to take place, in one or two cases—either when the attacker is so strong that he does not fear retribution, as in the case of the Japanese in China, or when he is desperate and regardless of consequences."<sup>1</sup> In the first volume of this

<sup>1</sup> Major F. A. de V. Robertson, *Manchester Guardian*, February 13, 1940.

work it was recorded that up to September 2 or 3, "whether on the highway, in a Metropolitan compartment, or a No 96 'bus, there was not to be seen one single gas-mask By the 8th everybody carried one" By February, 1940, save for the Services and the Police, they had again become the exception rather than the rule—the eccentric and sometimes contemptuously tolerated exception

The effect on the strength of A R P personnel of the Military Service Proclamation covering all age groups up to 28<sup>1</sup> was causing local authorities a good deal of anxiety It was estimated that when all these age groups had been called up the A R P services would lose about 10 per cent of their personnel, and that the rate of depletion would rapidly increase as each succeeding class was called up There was a particularly high percentage of men under thirty in the A F S<sup>2</sup> It was for this reason, and in view of the paramount importance of the service, that in February whole-time A F S men of thirty and over were placed on the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, and, later, the calling up of those over twenty-five was suspended until older men could be recruited to take their places

By the end of January, 1940, less than a year from the time when the production programme started, the Government had provided 2,000,000 householders' steel shelters The total number for whom protection had been provided at their homes was then 11,000,000 In factories shelter had been made available for about 5,000,000 people, including 3,000,000 employed on munitions work On January 9, 1940, the *Manchester Guardian* reported a curious circumstance in the delivery of shelters

<sup>1</sup> See page 181

<sup>2</sup> "In Manchester it has been put as high as 20 and certainly not below 15 per cent"—*Manchester Guardian*, January 24, 1940

"In spite of wireless appeals and appeals advertised in the Corporation buses and trams indicating that Anderson shelters were available by purchase for all citizens not entitled to them free of charge, not a single shelter has been delivered in Manchester to anyone ready to pay for one "

Local authorities were requested by the Board of Education to invite householders living within five minutes of schools to give shelter to schoolchildren during air raids. During school hours members of a household likely to be at home would be fewer than those for whom the shelter was provided, and there would consequently be some spare accommodation available. In January an interesting innovation in the provision of shelters was reported from Liverpool. A narrow back street and a number of back passages were being roofed in to serve as communal shelters.

An invulnerable underground fire-control room was completed in London at the end of February. The room, which is completely self-contained and entirely independent of the building above it, is capable of withstanding a direct hit from a 500-lb high explosive bomb, and is also gas-proof. From it are controlled the 67 brigades and 124 districts of the London Fire Region, which "stretches far beyond the limits of London—from Staines and Uxbridge in the west, to Dagenham and Crayford in the east, and from Waltham and Potter's Bar south to Orpington and Banstead, an area of roughly 700 square miles"<sup>1</sup>. There were 24,000 members of London's Auxiliary Fire Service doing whole-time service in January. They occupied 58 local stations and 344 sub-stations. The vehicle requirements of the London A F S were estimated at about 2,100, including 238 motor-bicycles.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, January 11, 1940

When the National A R P for Animals Committee was set up shortly before war broke out, the animal welfare societies placed at its disposal their personnel, premises, and equipment. Colonel R F Stordy, Executive Officer, had taken an animal's ambulance unit to Abyssinia during the Italian war. The Committee formed a large number of mobile units, consisting of a veterinary officer and two or three trained assistants. The units' tasks are to render first aid, humanely to destroy badly injured animals, to provide decontamination facilities, and, where the casualties are food animals, to salvage as many carcasses as possible for the Ministry of Food. The entire veterinary profession offered its services free to the Committee—"a response of a learned profession without precedent in the country's annals". The Committee gave advice on the treatment of gas-contaminated animals and on methods of making stables and byres gas-proof, instituted a scheme of animal registration, and issued identity discs for each registered animal.

The Finance Committee of the L C C estimated that a full year's expenditure on the Civil Defence Services for which the Council was responsible<sup>1</sup> would amount to £9,407,500, but of this amount only £1,070,000 would fall upon the rates. In addition, the Council's emergency hospital scheme for the treatment of war casualties was estimated to cost, in a full year, £972,710, practically the whole of which sum would be found by the Exchequer. Apart from £6,000,000 expenditure on Civil Defence Services, for which an estimate was approved by the Council on December 19, 1939, the estimated expenditure

<sup>1</sup> Auxiliary fire service, auxiliary ambulance service, rescue and demolition service and emergency feeding centres. An idea of the extent of these services is gained from the fact that they called for 4,000 motor vehicles of various kinds.

authorized by the Emergency Committee up to February, 1940, amounted to £405,000 on maintenance account, and £135,500 on capital account

The cost of providing and equipping air raid shelters for the L C C staff at County Hall and of blacking out the building was £18,000. Evacuation of part of the L C C staff involved an initial outlay of about £40,000, while the cost of maintaining the evacuees away from County Hall was at the rate of £23,000 a year

Lancashire County Council's expenditure on air raid precautions for the year ending March 31, 1940, was expected to reach nearly £2,000,000, of which about half was for shelters, and a quarter for personnel employed upon a whole-time paid basis. The total cost of personnel and 75 per cent of the remainder of the expenditure was to be borne by the Government. Between April 1 and December 27, 1939, the Liverpool Civil Defence Committee paid out £468,957 in wages. Birmingham's A R P Service was costing nearly £5,000 a day, or £1,825,000 a year, in January, 1940. Of this sum only about £330,000 would have to be met from the rates. Meal allowances for members of the Auxiliary Fire Service cost £50,000, and routine telephone calls from wardens' posts £10,000 a year.

By the end of the second quarter-year of the war there was being paid monthly to the country's Civil Defence volunteers a sum of £3,250,000.

Citizens' Advice Bureaux had been opened all over the country, under the auspices of the National Council of Social Service, soon after the outbreak of war, to give advice on the family and personal problems which a "lightning war" was expected to bring up. Although the *blitzkrieg* still hung fire six months later, the Bureaux were proving of great service to all sections of the community. At the end of the year there were 180 in the

London area, and 800 in other parts of the country. Clergymen, lawyers, borough councillors, doctors, and others with experience in social work gave their services through the Bureaux. "By far the most important questions (put to the Bureaux) are to do with financial difficulties, of which there are two principal sources . . . sudden and unexpected unemployment or loss of business caused by the war, and inadequate allowances for the families and dependants of men in the armed Forces."<sup>1</sup>

Red  
Cross

During the first few days of February the Lord Mayor's Red Cross and St. John Fund exceeded £1,000,000. Early in the year the Red Cross formed a Transport of Wounded Department to drive motor ambulances with the British Army overseas, and the first convoy was ready to leave at the end of February. It was only then beginning to be realized that the work of the Red Cross includes succour for the victims of enemy action at sea and of other kinds of sea disaster, together with ambulances to convey injured sailors from the ports to hospitals and homes.

#### 4 : EVACUATION

In the absence of the air attacks on land objectives in anticipation of which the evacuation scheme had been designed, the scheme collapsed. This is not to say, however, as many did, that the necessity for evacuation itself was disproved. Had air attacks taken place, this truth would have been self-evident ; their absence, with the thoughtless assumptions and irresponsible criticisms springing therefrom, makes it imperative to state that what was needed at the end of six months of war was not the abandonment of evacuation, but the improvement of the existing scheme, "should intermitted vengeance arm his red right hand to plague us."

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 17, 1940.

The collapse of the scheme is easily shown. By the first week in 1940, 316,000 or 43 per cent of the 735,000 schoolchildren evacuated, 223,500 or 86 per cent of the 260,000 accompanied children, and 146,000 or 87 per cent of the 166,000 mothers had returned.

Seventy per cent of the evacuated children of Glasgow, 46 per cent of those evacuated from Newcastle, and 38 per cent of those from Southampton had returned. Of Liverpool's 61,000 evacuees 28,000 had gone home. In Yorkshire, Leeds evacuated only 26 per cent, Bradford 28 per cent, and Sheffield<sup>1</sup> 17 per cent of the children who should have been moved. Half of Birmingham's evacuees had returned. Of Manchester's 90,000 evacuable children, over 66,000 left the city, but by the middle of January 36,000 had returned, leaving only 30,000 in the reception areas. About 70 per cent of the evacuees sent into the Lancashire County area had returned. About 35 per cent of London's 241,000 evacuated schoolchildren had returned by the beginning of February.

The position in regard to business firms was not so bad. Of the 3,453 firms that had left London at the beginning of September, only 561 had returned by the end of the year.

The London Chamber of Commerce, having raised the question whether business houses should bring their evacuated staffs back to London, the Minister of Home Security stated in January that the factors which led to

<sup>1</sup> Sheffield appears to have gained the doubtful honour of being the least evacuation-minded city. Of her 30,000 schoolchildren living in evacuation areas, only about 5,000 left the city in September, and by January 3,000 of these had returned. The Education Committee tackled the situation with great energy and imagination. Before the end of September they had improvised a system of class-teaching in the parents' homes, and not long after the Board of Education had agreed to the conditional reopening of schools, Sheffield had equipped 22 elementary schools with shelters and was giving part-time instruction to more than 16,000 children.



the transference of businesses to safer areas remained unchanged, and should be given the same weight as in September "Firms which can carry on outside London without serious dislocation of their work have acted in the national interest by removing their staffs to safer areas, and if they have found it possible to carry on their business from the areas to which they have moved they would be doing a disservice, not only to their staffs, but also to the national interest by returning now to London. The Government have never suggested that businesses which could not carry on outside London without serious loss of efficiency should remove to other areas, and it is for each individual firm to balance considerations of efficiency and convenience against the advantages of dispersal and to decide, in the light of the circumstances affecting its own business, which is the proper course for it to take "

In December the Government emphatically reaffirmed its decision to evacuate all departments that could function away from London <sup>1</sup> Between 20,000 and 21,000 Civil Servants had been evacuated from London by January 24, and on that date there were about 60,000 left in London. In February the staff side of the Whitley Council for the Civil Service was still continuing its agitation against further evacuation of Civil Servants, representing that evacuation breaks up family life and is too costly, particularly for married men who have, in effect, to maintain two homes. It cannot be denied that this grievance of Civil Servants shocked many members of the public who could not help reflecting that the "hardships" these people were undergoing in luxury seaside hotels were hardly comparable to those endured without a murmur by their defenders. Commenting on this

<sup>1</sup> In a letter from the Minister of Health to the Civil Service Clerical Association

evacuation of Civil Servants, the Minister of Health said that only one-half of 1 per cent of the 2,700 employees of his Ministry had failed to report at Blackpool. It was right that this should be known, but it was wrong that they should ignore the work of "the 99½ per cent who are working loyally and untiringly in new and sometimes difficult circumstances, to make sure that the pensions are paid up to date, and the health benefits properly awarded."

At the end of the first half-year of the war, the Department of Social Science of the University of Liverpool published a valuable Report on the problem of evacuation.<sup>1</sup> The enquiry was primarily psychological, "since it was assumed that the only thing really worth examination was the effect of evacuation on the individual hosts and guests, and the only causes worth probing were those which motivated their actions." The first part of the enquiry, carried out in a working-class district in Liverpool, in October, 1939, dealt with evacuation mainly from the point of view of the guest, the second part was conducted in the reception areas, and covered both points of view. The enquiry undertaken in Liverpool disclosed that the following were among the main issues involved in the scheme

- 1 "The great difficulty of the mother in adapting herself to the new environment, the host in accepting the intrusion of somebody who has a different standard of living
- 2 "The fact that the separation of the parents from the children frequently gives rise to a serious emotional problem
- 3 "Lack of selection in placing the children (e.g., those who are found to be unhealthy or verminous). It was suggested that the officials

<sup>1</sup> *Our War-time Guests—Opportunity or Menace?*

should arrange for a medical examination of the evacuees, and those unsuitable for private houses should be sent immediately to camps and hostels ”

- 4 “The sending of people to reception areas in which accommodation was not available This, of course, meant their immediate return
- 5 “The departure of the mother from the home, leaving behind members of the family who are unused to managing on their own, with resulting difficulty and the possibility of the home being still further broken up In addition, there is the economic difficulty of keeping two homes together

Statistics<sup>1</sup> for January showed that in one Welsh county the scheme had succeeded well, whilst in another it had not been an absolute failure “Complete success rarely attends any voluntary measure, and certainly not one demanding such degrees of self-sacrifice and stoicism as evacuation”, the scheme had, in fact, not failed nearly so completely as was generally supposed

Dealing with the criticism that the authorities should have built camps for the evacuees, the Report declared that there is no evidence that the erection of such quarters would have been a success “child psychologists are agreed that the best of institutional care compares unfavourably with a moderately good home ”

A very different view was expressed in a petition, put forward in Somerset in January, requesting a town con-

1		Children arrived	Children remaining	Children returned
Wales	County I	569 (100%)	214 (43%)	325 (57%)
Wales	County II	465 (100%)	375 (81%)	90 (19%)
	Suburb	630 (100%)	120 (19%)	510 (81%)
	Residential Area	2,500 (100%)	643 (26%)	1,857 (74%)

ference to consider evacuation problems. According to the signatories, the nerves of foster-mothers in Taunton were beginning to fray through the strain of what promised to be a permanent intrusion in their homes. Four months of evacuation had had their effects on householders, children, teachers and billeting officers. "Essential foods are scarcer and prices are rising rapidly. Children are reacting to changed atmosphere in homes by becoming more restless and are showing indications of emotional disturbance." They did not recommend the removal of children comfortably settled without full concurrence of their foster-parents, but they considered that a better alternative to the billeting system was the taking over of unoccupied mansions for hostels for feeding, sleeping, and recreational purposes pending the erection of school camps.

The Cheshire County Association of Teachers also supported the school camp idea. Although the President could well believe the statement by the Minister of Health that to accommodate 1,500,000 people in camps would entail a capital expenditure of £100,000,000, he was yet of opinion that "given time and money, that does seem the way out, for the camps created would not be wasted in post-war years"<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the period under review there were some forty camps for evacuated schoolchildren. One

<sup>1</sup> "It may be argued that the war, whether we win or lose it, will impoverish us for generations to come, yet when we witness the stupendous expenditure on the machinery and manpower of war, we are bound to conclude that if we have the will to provide for that, there is nothing which we cannot achieve within the bounds of reason. Most of the expenditure on this vast production of war material will only have changed hands within the borders of our own country. The fortunes made through the war must be well taxed in order to rebuild a brave new world, or else the war will have been fought in vain"—F. EVANS, *Quarterly Review*, January, 1940.

The author inclines to a certain scepticism with regard to the likelihood of any fortunes being made through this war.

of these, Kennylands School, at Sonning Common, near Reading, accommodated 250 boys of the Beal Modern Central School, Ilford. The camp, which is entirely self-contained, was planned before the war by the National Camps Corporation to accommodate various schools for three weeks at a time. Consisting of a series of wooden buildings, all centrally heated, the school has dormitories, classrooms, a hall convertible into a theatre or cinema, and a dining-hall.

To those who assert that evacuation should have been compulsory, the Liverpool Report replies that although under the voluntary system "it was a source of irritation that a neighbour should refuse her share in a common duty" the damage which would have been done to children compulsorily thrust into homes where they were emphatically not wanted cannot be overlooked. The Report concludes that it was not in "the *general* conception of the scheme that the fault lay," but in the "personal equation." A remarkable and very hopeful sign was that no complaints whatever were made of five-sixths of the children still evacuated at the time of the inquiry. This is shown as follows:

Children about whom no complaints are made	86%
Children about whom complaints are made, but where hostess tries to overcome difficulties	7%
Children about whom only complaints are made	7%
	<hr/> 100% <hr/>

On the whole, "the number of complaints against the children was more dependent on the hostess's attitude towards the scheme in general than on any factor inherent in the child. A hostess who approved of the scheme did not find much cause for complaint against the children, but to those who disapproved of the scheme the diffi-

culties seemed overwhelming” About half of the hosts who objected to the scheme, but only one in seven of those who approved it, had insuperable difficulties with their evacuees Out of 254 hostesses only 19 expressed disapproval of the scheme as against 61 who were willing to carry on though not enthusiastic and 174 who were very favourably disposed towards it These figures, cheering in themselves, become even more so when it is remembered that in nearly every case evacuation demanded real sacrifices from the hostesses, they had perforce to work much longer hours and to stay at home on many evenings when they would otherwise have gone out

Attempts to discover which of the inconveniences and sacrifices they were subjected to loomed largest in the consciousness of the hostesses gave interesting results 46 per cent said *more work*, 26 per cent, *inability to go out*, 19 per cent *less privacy*, 6 per cent, *too much responsibility* “Possibly it was felt subconsciously that the chief objection, ‘more work,’ would meet with scant approval in view of the appeal for National Service, and therefore stress was laid on such arguments as ‘family privacy,’ of traditionally English appeal, with the object of gaining public sympathy Only in conversation with our interviewers could hostesses bring themselves to face frankly the fact that it was the extra work they grudged rather than the loss of privacy” There were more complaints from “middle-class” than from “working-class” homes, and more from hostesses with no children of their own—this obviously because the coming of children involved a complete disruption of normal life

The behaviour of the children was on the whole very good, and they showed remarkable adaptability Secondary schoolchildren were said to be less well-behaved than elementary, but this may have been due to the

interesting psychological fact that it is "more difficult to put up with an evacuee to whose standard one feels somewhat inferior, than to have a verminous child in respect of whom one can feel very superior "

Behaviour problems presented less difficulty than enuresis, or bed-wetting, from which 9 per cent of all children were discovered to be sufferers. But of the children who remained in their billets only 4 per cent were thus suffering, compared to 16 per cent of those who had returned home. Boys suffered more than girls. Unfortunately, only a very small percentage of the hostesses regarded enuresis as a symptom either of neurosis or of neglect, the majority thought of it as crime, with the not-surprising result that their efforts to cure it were unavailing.

The proportion of verminous children, 17 per cent, was depressingly high, and 11 per cent were not only verminous, but had dirty bodies and clothes. Vermin and dirt were the worst stumbling-blocks in the way of hostesses, and not only that. "rapidly spreading rumours of vermin infestation influenced public opinion in favour of those people who did not want to co-operate in the scheme, and wished to get rid of the children. Public opinion is a strong force, and the scheme might have been much more successful if these rumours had not led to a widespread conviction that it was a failure." But there is a credit side, even to this. It exposed the surprisingly unhygienic conditions in parts of our towns, and should hasten their abolition. Towards the end of February, Miss Margaret Bondfield<sup>1</sup> opened, at the Housing Centre in Suffolk Street, London, an exhibition of photographs and posters illustrating the sort of housing conditions under which lived many of the evacuated children whose condition and habits were objectionable.

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Labour in the second Labour Government (1929-31)

In one of the homes depicted, nine people lived in two rooms, there was no place for refuse, no food store, one tap for five families, and two lavatories for nine families. The Bishop of Chichester, presiding, pointed out that many of the hosts had no conception of what slum-life meant, so that instead of ascribing the trouble to horrible conditions they thoughtlessly blamed the children. "Perhaps evacuation may prove to be the best exhibition of housing conditions in the slums that the country has ever had"<sup>1</sup>

According to the Liverpool Report, the parents of the evacuated children behaved well towards the hosts. 89 per cent of the hosts "spoke only in friendly terms of the parents". Moreover, 22 per cent "expressed their pleasure at the gratitude shown by parents".

In the early days of evacuation much play was made of the allegation that a large number of parents expected the hosts to give them meals when they visited their offspring. In fact, only 4 per cent of the hosts complained of it. "the big majority of working-class people were terrified they might do something to upset the hosts".

The following table sets out the opinions expressed on the question of the adequacy or otherwise of the billeting allowance.<sup>2</sup>

	Residential Areas and Suburbs	Wales, County I and County II
Allowance adequate	52 (34%)	17 (29%)
Enough for food, but not for other things	76 (49%)	11 (19%)
Inadequate	27 (17%)	31 (52%)

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, February 23, 1940

<sup>2</sup> The billeting allowance for children of fourteen and over was increased to 10s 6d a week on March 2, 1940. Billeting was the main item in evacuation costs, and expenditure thereon was about £7,000,000 for the first six months.



from which it will be observed that the hosts in Wales were markedly less satisfied than their residential and suburban colleagues—a difference not attributable to the Welsh character, but to the fact that they had older boys with larger appetites. The allowance was inadequate for people who were accustomed to good food, and who gave the children the same food as they themselves had. It is pleasing to learn that this did not daunt the better off middle-class hostess, who gladly gave more than 8s 6d could buy.

Some middle-class hosts were unable to believe that any of the evacuees was too poor to have good clothes.<sup>1</sup> They conceived the notion that the parents had deliberately sent them ragged, keeping back their best clothes in the hope that the hosts might supply them with new ones. This idea was entirely without foundation. "the majority of parents went to great trouble to provide what they thought were adequate clothes, and many of them, got themselves into debt in order to do so." The children may have inadvertently strengthened this impression by replying, when asked whether they had brought all their clothes, that they had left their Sunday clothes at home: this statement was untrue, but presumably the children did not want to admit that they had nothing better to wear. Sunday clothes are a sign of respectability, and many mothers keep their children in the house on Sunday because they are ashamed that they have no special clothes for them.

The Report produces a revealing reply to the question "Why did evacuated children leave the reception areas?" The parents blamed the hosts, the hosts the parents, and

<sup>1</sup> "One little boy wrote to his mother 'The country is a funny place. They never tell you you can't have no more to eat, and under the bed is wasted.' Two other children were bewildered at the sight of a meal spread on a table, and chairs to sit on."—*The Times*, January 30, 1940

the authorities one another. According to the hosts, out of 259 children, 170, or 67 per cent, left because the parents wanted them to leave. Only 44, or 17 per cent left because the hosts wanted them to leave, and only 24 or 10 per cent left because they themselves wanted to leave. According to the parents, 40 per cent of the children returned because of the fault of the host, 41 per cent because they themselves were homesick,<sup>1</sup> and only 19 per cent because the parents wanted to remove them. Those responsible for the Report were of the opinion that the hosts were more nearly in the right than the parents. More than half the children returned because the parents wished them to. Independent support for this conclusion is supplied from the St Pancras Improvement Society, whose representative stated that the chief reason for the return of the children "was that the parents found they could not do without them. Life was too bleak and too dull without the children, and although there had been no pressure, the decision that parents would be expected to pay where they could was in many cases the deciding factor."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury appears to attach more importance to the factor of homesickness on the part of the children than do other authorities. Speaking in the House of Lords on February 7, 1940, "A large party of children from the slums of Glasgow were billeted in my holiday home in Scotland, and I regret to say that the experience of the few weeks was sufficient to convince these children that the attractions of one of the most beautiful spots in the West Highlands could not be compared with the attractions of their native slums, and they promptly returned." The real and constraining reason for the return of these children was the strength of the homing instinct. "That fact is significant and pathetic," he said. "Significant because it shows the strength of our family life, and pathetic when we remember the kinds of homes to which most of these children were willing to return."

<sup>2</sup> But according to an article in *The Times* (January 30, 1940), "Expense has not been a main factor in bringing children home, the greatest returns took place before the scheme of contributions was announced. Of some 272,000 parents who have evacuated their children, over 40 per cent are paying the full 6s a week or over."

Few parents of elementary schoolchildren gave any consideration to the fact that the bringing back of the children meant their going without schooling. It was otherwise with the parents of secondary schoolchildren, partly because these were able to have the evacuees home at week-ends. This "explains why 92 per cent of the evacuated boys in Wales, County I, are still in their billets."

In an attempt to discover whether future evacuation would be possible, the researchers tried to determine the attitude of hosts whose evacuees had returned home. The majority, 38 per cent, unconditionally approved the scheme, 30 per cent gave conditional approval, and fewer than one-third regarded the scheme as a failure. These statistics appeared encouraging. On the other hand, an enquiry instituted by Lord Derby among local authorities in Lancashire reception areas seemed to show that "another general evacuation on the lines of the original scheme would not be welcomed by the reception areas, and might well be a failure in many places."

The Report concludes that, in so far as evacuation was a failure, it was so because of faults in the administrative machinery, and not because of any "fundamental weakness in the ties which bind our community together, or absence of public spirit on the part of hosts or parents."

"All through the enquiry the fact emerged again and again that if there had been some properly qualified person<sup>1</sup> in the reception areas armed with authority to advise or to deal with the problems that arose, a great number of the difficulties would have been smoothed out, and the children allowed to remain in the 'safe' areas." As it was, Voluntary Committees, assisted by

<sup>1</sup> "One or two authorities have had the wisdom to send out experts in child guidance to deal with the misfits and place the difficult children together under skilled care"—*The Times* (January 30, 1940)

members of the Women's Voluntary Services, struggled valiantly with difficulties in the reception areas "It is obviously impossible, however, for anyone but a trained and experienced social worker" to deal with evacuation problems

Details of the second evacuation plan which was to be voluntary, and to apply only to schoolchildren, were announced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Health in the middle of February. Parents in evacuation areas were to be asked to decide beforehand whether or not they wanted their children to be sent to a safer area if air raids develop on land. Evacuation was not to be general, it was to be a series of movements from areas that had actually been attacked or were likely to be attacked. Householders in reception areas were to be asked to put their names on a roll of those ready to share in the work of receiving schoolchildren who were already in the district or who might be sent there later. In a leaflet which was to be distributed in reception areas early in March, the Minister of Health said that the country was faced with a double task—to prepare for the future, and to keep in the safer areas all the children who were already there. The first duty was for the Government and the public authorities. The second could only be done by the children's parents and the householders in the receiving areas. In response to the Government's appeal in 1939, offers were made to receive 2,300,000 children, but only about a quarter of these offers were taken up. Was it fair that the whole burden should fall continuously on one man—or, rather, one woman—in four?

A leaflet informed parents in the evacuation areas that the Government had decided that if there were air raids the parents would have another chance of sending their children away, and that this time the children would not

go until air raids made it necessary. The new scheme would be for schoolchildren who were at school last July, or who had reached the age of five. It applied to no others. It was particularly pointed out that this was the opportunity to register children for evacuation, and that the paper should be filled up and returned at once. Parents who wished their children to be registered were asked to sign an undertaking that they would send them with the school party if evacuation were ordered, and that they intended to leave them in the receiving area until the party returned. Dirty and diseased children would not be sent to billets, but would, in company with "difficult" children, be housed in hostels prepared by local authorities.

It had been discovered from only a few months' experience of the working of the first evacuation scheme that "the most successful school parties evacuated to reception areas are those which were able to keep together as school units. In the case of schools of the secondary grade, where they have been able to link up in the reception areas with other schools of similar type and size, the evacuation has been more complete and generally successful. In one case, after about two-thirds of a school had been evacuated and linked up in this way with a similar school in the reception town, a second registration of children for evacuation resulted in almost all the remaining children joining their school colleagues"<sup>1</sup> For this reason the Government planned, under the second evacuation scheme, to move schools as units, but they were unable to accept the view that, to be successful, the scheme would have to be carried out on communal lines, and all the children housed in hostels and camps.

<sup>1</sup> F. Evans, *Quarterly Review*, January, 1940

## 5 EDUCATION

During December and January the chaos in educational matters brought about by the evacuation scheme<sup>1</sup> increased rather than diminished. The Board of Education, seemingly paralysed by the complexity of the problem confronting it, and awaiting rather than giving a lead, refused to take action until the public, the Press, and the local authorities were unitedly and loudly protesting against its continued inertia.

By mid-January the Manchester Education Committee unanimously declared that "it is desirable that compulsory school attendance should be restored as soon as possible." This was the first resolution of its kind, but it represented the opinion of local authorities all over the country. The public needed reminding that the whole of the educational and allied services built up since 1870 were based on compulsory attendance at school. Once this went, medical inspection, school feeding, free milk, and services of that kind would go, too, and with it—even more important—the safeguarding of children from too early employment. There was a danger of children being employed as much as thirty-two hours a week, since under certain local authorities it was permissible to employ children under fourteen for five hours of any weekday on which they were not required to go to school. By the end of January the demand for the restoration of compulsion had been voiced by the Central Council of the National Union of Women Teachers, the leading secondary school teachers' associations, the National

<sup>1</sup> See *The First Quarter*, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Early in March 32 per cent of Manchester's children were getting full-time schooling, 28 per cent were receiving no instruction at all, 22 per cent were having tutorial instruction, 1½ per cent were on half time, 4 per cent (infants) were being visited by teachers in their homes.

Association of Head Teachers, the Corporation of Edinburgh, and the Workers' Educational Association

A practical test of the educational deterioration induced by war conditions had been carried out in December by the Rochdale (Lancashire) Education Committee.<sup>1</sup> Rochdale is a neutral area with an elementary school population of 10,000. The two-shift system was introduced as soon as possible after the outbreak of war, nevertheless, all pupils lost a considerable number of school hours—some, in the first fourteen weeks, as many as thirteen, none less than four, normal school weeks. Pupils in the eleven-year-old age group were put through an examination, and the results were compared with those of a precisely similar examination held in the previous March. The degree of deterioration was found to be remarkably uniform. “the average mark gained by the candidates indicated an almost consistent decline of about 11 per cent in each paper.”

Having established the extent of the educational deterioration, the Committee were able to prove that the deterioration was proportionate to the number of school hours lost. Little research was necessary to show that the pupils had lost as much in manners and habits as in academic attainment.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the first term of 1940 over 400,000 children in the evacuation areas—about one-third of the total in these areas—were receiving no education of any kind. “Even in the 100 local education areas called neutral, only forty-three authorities were providing full-time schooling, the rest reaching only 62 per cent of their children.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, December 29, 1939

<sup>2</sup> Dr J J Mallon described the serious deterioration of discipline which had been noticed in the East End of London. Some children were going to bed at midnight, and rising at noon. One magistrate had complained to him that they were encouraging a “generation of Artful Dodgers”—*the Times*, February 1, 1940

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, February 5, 1940

The Government's intention of insisting on compulsory full-time education for all children by the beginning of April, provided that the local authorities had by then put in hand the necessary air-raid protection for them, and were likely to complete it within three or four weeks, was announced in the House on February 7. On the same date local authorities were circularized and urged to "set themselves the goal of providing full-time education for all children, including infants". The Board recognized "that there are many authorities who will have to start by providing only half-time education, but, while it is realized that this may be inevitable as an interim objective, pending the making of more complete arrangements, they are confident that authorities generally will share their opinion that the half-time arrangement should not be accepted as satisfactory for more than a limited period, unless in very exceptional circumstances".

Attendance at school in evacuation areas has, on the instructions of the Government, so far been at the option of the parents, but the Government realize that, as a permanent arrangement, voluntary attendance cannot be satisfactory, either from the educational or from the social and medical standpoints, and they are, therefore, anxious that the law of school attendance should again be enforced as soon as sufficient school accommodation, whether on the full-time or half-time basis, is available.

Since it cannot be assumed that the absence of attack so far experienced in evacuation areas will continue indefinitely, the Government realize that, if school attendance is again to be enforced, the parents concerned must be allowed, if they so desire, to take advantage for their children of the possibility of evacuation to the comparative safety of the reception areas."

These evidences of the Government's anxiety to restore



compulsory full-time education were noted everywhere with relief, but disappointment was felt that there was not apparently going to be any insistence that urban local authorities should release their school buildings for the purposes for which they had been designed. The circular merely "urged greater efforts by the local authorities." In many areas—and particularly in London—great difficulty was experienced in recovering the school buildings from civil defence organizations, although there had been active co-operation on the part of such organizations. Another important obstacle in the way of the restoration of normal educational facilities was the depletion of the Board's personnel. Over fifty inspectors were absent from their duties in January, while at the end of February 555 members of the Board's staff were on loan to other departments, and nearly 200 were serving with the Forces.

When announcing the Government's intention to return to compulsion in the evacuation areas,<sup>1</sup> Lord De La Warr made it known that of the 1,250,000 children in these areas, some 400,000 were still receiving "no schooling or care at all." On the other hand, between 80 and 90 per cent of the 400,000-odd evacuees in the reception areas were working full time, and 95 per cent of the 1,500,000 children in the neutral areas were at school, the majority working full time. Early in March he was able to state that out of a total of nearly 5,000,000 school-children, well over 3,500,000 were now receiving full-time education, nearly 700,000 half-time, and a great many of the rest were receiving home service teaching. In the reception areas, where there were 2,000,000 local children and over 400,000 evacuees, 95 per cent were receiving full-time education.

<sup>1</sup> In the reception and neutral areas education was, and always had been, compulsory.

Because of London's paramount importance in the London evacuation-education complex, the author considers its problems to be worthy of more detailed consideration than he has given to other areas

The number of London children of compulsory school age on the roll of elementary schools was 390,000, but this figure omits a large number under five who were attending school. By the middle of February, when there were some 200,000 schoolchildren in London, 200 elementary schools, affording half-time education to two groups of children totalling 69,000, had been re-opened. By March 1, school accommodation on a half-time basis had been provided for all London children aged eleven years and over, and on that date attendance was made compulsory for all children in this category. It was expected that by the end of March, 400 council and 150 non-provided schools would have been re-opened.<sup>1</sup> These comprised all the available schools, except those in unsuitable areas and those in which, for structural reasons, adequate air-raid protection could not be provided.

About 70 per cent of the pupils in maintained and aided London secondary schools had been evacuated in September. No provision was made in the votes presented to the Education Committee of the L C C. on February 21, 1940, for the resumption of secondary school facilities in London, but an amount was included in provisional sums for this purpose.

About 5 per cent of London's secondary schoolchildren had returned by February, when it was estimated that there were between 7,000 and 8,000 in the metropolitan area. Practically all the secondary school teachers had been evacuated, and very few had returned. Out of a total of 78 secondary school buildings, eight were wholly,

<sup>1</sup> This expectation was not, unfortunately, fulfilled

and twenty-nine partly, occupied for defence purposes in February. The Education Committee decided "as a beginning and with full-time education as the ultimate objective," to provide half-time education in twelve London emergency secondary schools and, in addition, at secondary school tutorial classes. At the same time, fearing that the provision of facilities for secondary education in London might result in the parents of many of the pupils bringing them back to London, they did what they could, by emphasizing the continued seriousness of the situation, to prevent the parents from doing so.

More than 3,000 pupils in junior technical schools had been evacuated in September. A limited number of technical institutions were opened for the autumn session, and it was estimated in February that only about one-third of the normal activities would have to be provided for. There were about 140 evening institutes open in London in February, and it was expected that about 100,000 students, or half the normal number, would have to be provided for in 1940.

The L.C.C.'s gross maintenance expenditure on education for the financial year 1940-41 was estimated at £12,429,225, as compared with £14,104,635 for 1939-40.

Facilities for the medical and dental treatment of schoolchildren in London had been resumed at the end of October, after only two months' suspension. By the end of January, 1940, 45 minor ailment centres had been reopened, 1,840 children had received treatment, and 23,250 had been medically examined, while 1,742 children had received dental attention. Milk clubs and free milk for undernourished children were provided for emergency schools and tutorial classes. By January there were 500 milk clubs, supplying over 20,000 children. In the period of three and a half months during which no London schools were open for normal instruction, steps

were taken to organize a special scheme designed to bring the children under the supervision of those teachers who were available in London. The scheme actually began during the last week of September, when there were only 300 teachers in London. Meetings of these teachers were held in the various districts, and addressed by one or other of the few Council's inspectors available. As redundant teachers returned to London from reception areas, they were brought into the scheme, which by the end of December was using the services of 2,011 assistant teachers and 117 head teachers. It is estimated that by this time well over 100,000 of the London schoolchildren were receiving assistance and systematic supervision. This is more than 50 per cent of the number of schoolchildren then in London.

Special problems were presented, on the one hand, by children under school age, and, on the other, by young people who had left school but were too young for the Services. The National Youth Committee was set up to deal with the problems of those between 14 and 18 years of age, thus "laying the foundations of what we have long needed in this country—a central focus for problems of all kinds connected with youth, linking up the Board and other departments with all the agencies, official and unofficial, and providing a channel through which the problems of youth can be dealt with".<sup>1</sup>

The desirability of making provision for the social training and occupation of evacuated children under school age—those between two and five—was emphasized in a circular issued in January by the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. They urged the establishment of nursery centres for children between two and five—"something between day nurseries and nursery schools"—in private houses. Each would contain from 10 to 20

<sup>1</sup> Lord De La Warr

children, and be in charge of a warden superior or a teacher. Control would be vested in local committees, consisting of representatives of the education, welfare, and reception authorities, and of the Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence.

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The Board of Education estimates for 1940 amounted to £52,544,573, an increase of £302,537. The cost of administration and inspection had risen slightly, as had also the local expenditure on conveying children to and from school, but there were to be reductions in the expenditure on secondary education and technical expenditure, and a strict limitation of capital expenditure on building.

## 6 Food

By the end of February 85 per cent (by value) of the total imports of foodstuffs were being bought and sold by the Ministry of Food, and varying degrees of control by licensing were exercised over the greater part of the other 15 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Since we depend largely on imports for every foodstuff except vegetables, fish, milk, and potatoes, this Government control was drastically comprehensive.<sup>2</sup> Its extent was criticized as harmful and unnecessary by sections of the Press and of the food trades, but to the general public it seemed as inevitable as Government control of the Armed Forces.

Food rationing was introduced in a number of neutral European countries before it was adopted in England. Before the end of 1939 tea and coffee were practically unobtainable in Italy and Hungary. Flour, oil, butter, cooking fats, and sugar were rationed in Italy, Hungary

<sup>1</sup> Which included fruit.

<sup>2</sup> Before the war we imported 90 per cent of our fats and flour, 50 per cent of our meat, and 40 per cent of our eggs.

and Switzerland Bulgaria had three meatless days a week, Danes and Hollanders were rationed for sugar. Conditions in Spain were worse than anywhere else in Europe "Even the tourist, generally the most favoured of mortals—since he brings what all nations desire, foreign currency—is unable at times to get coffee, milk, butter, or sometimes bread. Breakfast at one of the largest hotels in one place was bean coffee and nothing else. Towns are sometimes without flour or bread for two or three days. There is hardly any milk—herds of cows have been destroyed, and where is the money to buy new stock? Olive groves, orange groves, fields, have been laid waste, and, though the Government make efforts to feed children in communal kitchens, and to dole out relief, it is tragic to think of what the winter will bring."<sup>1</sup>

How very different were conditions in England. Here, indeed, the tightening of the belt had, for the greater part of the population, been effected, if at all, by the opposite method—an occasional extra square meal. The rationing scheme came into operation on January 8, eighteen weeks after the outbreak of war. Broadcasting on the same day, the Minister of Food explained that rationing did not imply a shortage. "We have all the food we need. We worked out the rationing scheme before the war, as we laid down reserves of some of the foodstuffs, as a matter of sheer prudence—we are not waiting for the food queues, but are forestalling and preventing them. From now onwards there will be fair distribution of supplies. We will not ask our menfolk at sea to bring us more food than we need.<sup>2</sup> Let them bring instead of that surplus more and more of all that will increase our protection and their strength. And,

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, December 30, 1939

<sup>2</sup> In normal times foodstuffs represent 45 per cent of our total imports

until we have won the victory, we at home will share out what our men bring us as they share the dangers of their service "

The first commodities to be rationed were butter (4 oz ), sugar (12 oz ), bacon and ham (4 oz )<sup>1</sup> Members of the Forces on leave were allowed more generous rations than those fixed for the civil population They were issued with ration cards of two kinds, one for leave of a fortnight, and the other for short leave up to 72 hours The first enabled them to obtain weekly 21 oz of sugar, 14 oz of bacon and ham, and 7 oz of butter , the other, half these amounts Seamen whose provisions were supplied by shipowners received 24 oz of sugar, 12 oz of butter, and 6 oz of bacon and ham

Catering establishments were allowed to serve bacon and ham without surrender of coupons At the end of January the bacon allowance was raised to 8 oz a week, and prices were reduced by an average of 2d a pound, partly because thousands of people were unable to afford to buy any bacon at the existing price<sup>2</sup> It had previously been decreed that bacon for boiling might be bought without coupons Before the ration was increased retailers were frequently left with large quantities of bacon, and knew not how to dispose of it Local food

<sup>1</sup> How the rationed quantities compared with normal consumption will be seen from the following table taken from *The People's Food*, by Crawford and Broadley

	Average weekly consumption in Class			
	Upper	Middle	Artisan & Upper Working	Unskilled Workers
	Oz	Oz	Oz	Oz
Butter	11 3	10 3	7 2	4 5
Margarine	1 5	1 4	2 4	3 7
Bacon	6 0	6 1	4 5	3 6
Sugar	17 9	17 2	16 8	15 2

<sup>2</sup> When rationing was introduced maximum retail prices ranged from 1s 2d for streaky thin green to 2s 2d for smoked back

control committees might allow retailers to dispose of the surplus, but "some of the divisional control officers threaten legal action if retailers sell excess quantities, and enforcement officers are being appointed to go round the districts to see that the rationing order is strictly observed. Between these conflicting instructions retailers hesitate about selling beyond the coupon quantity"<sup>1</sup>

Of sugar, extra supplies could be obtained by anyone wishing to make marmalade or jam. Manufacturers were rationed, their allowances, based upon a percentage of normal peace-time consumption, ranged from 100 per cent for drugs to 40 per cent for mineral waters and candied peel. Rationing cut down domestic consumption of sugar by one-quarter, but left the British among the biggest consumers of sugar in the world. There was no danger of sugar shortage. When war broke out, Britain, in conjunction with Canada, had contracted to buy all the Empire producers' available supplies at prices based on pre-war levels. Some of the season's crops—from Queensland, Natal, Fiji, Mauritius, the British West Indies, and British Guiana—had been sold and exported to Canada and the United Kingdom before the end of the year. The balance was being shipped as tonnage became available. The home crop for 1939 was about 475,000 tons, compared with 290,000 in 1938 and 380,000 in 1937.

Early in February the Minister of Food announced that meat rationing would be introduced on March 11. The ration would be on a value basis, and would, at the beginning, be at the rate of 1s 10d per week for each person over six years of age, and half that amount for children under six. Pending the introduction of rationing, meat was to be allocated to the retail butcher and to catering establishments on the basis of what they would

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 30, 1940



be entitled to after rationing began. Restaurants, canteens, and the like, would be permitted to serve meat meals coupon free, but the total amount of meat allocated to the catering trade would be limited. Liver, kidneys, tripe, heart, oxtail and other edible offals, as well as poultry and game, would be sold free of the coupon. The same applied to manufactured products, such as sausages and meat pies, where the meat content does not exceed 50 per cent.

Rationing by value rather than by weight was adopted, because it allows for variations of quality and differences in the proportion of bone to meat. The customer will be able to choose between a larger amount of a less expensive cut or vice versa. If meat were rationed by weight the ration would give the same amounts of high and low quality. Rationing by value was the method of the Great War. The present allowance of 1s 10d a week provides a larger quantity than at any stage of rationing between 1914 and 1919.

Before the decision to ration meat was taken the farmers were guaranteed a market for their livestock at prices which took into account the actual cost of production. The farmer could make his arrangements, knowing that the scale of prices would apply until the end of June, 1940. A scheme of Government control of livestock and home-produced meat, an essential preliminary to rationing, had been brought into operation in the middle of January. As a result of the change-over to the new system there was a temporary scarcity of home-killed meat.

According to the secretary of the Ministry of Food, the principal difficulty with which the Ministry and food traders would have to contend in the future would be shortage of cold-storage space. The cold-storage space in London was considerably in excess of war-time needs.

The deficiencies existed in the inland areas, and, to a lesser extent, at the West Coast ports. The Ministry had embarked upon a programme of new construction. As a first instalment the Office of Works would erect eight temporary stores on sites carefully selected to take the fullest advantage of rail, road, and water connection at certain ports, and in large inland centres of consumption. The stores would be managed on Government account, storage charges at the fixed rates being debited to the various commodity controls as if they were privately owned.

Early in February the vitaminization<sup>1</sup> of all categories of margarine was ordered, and not long afterwards even the cheapest varieties were equal in vitamin value to butter. This was done so that those who are unable to buy butter should not thereby be deprived of Vitamin A, the lack of which leads to night blindness, and possibly to permanent damage to the eye.<sup>2</sup>

The North of England Wholesale Grocers' Association challenged the Government's statement that "supplies of margarine were virtually unlimited." The following explanation of the alleged shortage was given in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*:

"Peace-time consumption of butter was 9,500 tons per week, margarine 4,000 tons—a total of 13,500 tons. The former works out at approximately half a pound per head of the population. This quantity will be halved during rationing. The deficit will therefore be 4,750 tons of butter per week. Your informant says that margarine production has been increased by 30 per cent—that is, the 4,000 tons produced and consumed before the war now becomes about 5,300 tons per week. The combined quantity available now is just over 10,000 tons—a shortage of no less than 3,400 tons per week, or about 25 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No evading of this hideous heptasyllable.

<sup>2</sup> A test of capacity to see in the black-out disclosed the fact that one out of four elementary schoolchildren suffered from Vitamin A deficiency.

What is the Ministry of Food going to do about it?"<sup>1</sup> The retail prices of margarine selling at 6d and 7d were in February increased by 1d, but that of the 5d a pound variety—the cheapest—was not increased.

At the end of January the Tea (Provisional Prices) Order, 1939, by which tea prices were pegged to pre-war levels, was revoked.

In the early stages there was a certain local scarcity of tea, attributable to the fact that some fifty-five million pounds had been dispersed from bonded warehouses on Thames-side to safe areas in the provinces, where they became temporarily immobilized. The conditions of speed and black-out under which the dispersal was carried out led to the inclusion with bonded teas of some five million pounds of duty-paid tea belonging to private owners. A large quantity of the dispersed teas could not be traced and identified until January. The main reason for the almost incredible "mislaying" of so enormous a quantity seems to have lain in putting forward the plans for the evacuation of London schoolchildren. In consequence of this, the elaborate plans for the transport of the tea by road and rail had to be scrapped, and it was despatched northwards in hurriedly chartered coastal vessels. With the sorting out of the stocks and the fixing of contracts with the Empire producing countries, backed by the requisition of all imports, the Ministry became the sole importer of tea, and from the end of the year tea was in good supply throughout the country at prices about 6 per cent above the pre-war level.

In their invaluable study, *Feeding the People in War Time*, Sir John Orr and Mr David Lubbock expressed

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 9, 1940. The Ministry answered the letter-writer's question in March by doubling the butter ration. If everyone could have afforded to take his or her ration the consumption in March would have been the same as before the war, but from February 1 all butter had been sold as "National" at 1s 6d or 1s 7d a pound.

the opinion that the food measures taken during the first six months were based too much on control of distribution and too little on the health requirements of the people. While they admitted the necessity for wholesale rationing and the fixing of wholesale prices, they were unable to accept the necessity of individual rationing, and the fixing of retail prices. Given fixed wholesale prices, competition among retailers would be sufficient to prevent retail profiteering.<sup>1</sup> As for individual rationing "Food-stuffs are already rigorously rationed by price," as is obvious from the fact that "one-third of the population did not purchase the rationed amounts even in peacetime."<sup>2</sup> They receive the coupons, but without the money they cannot get the butter or bacon. On the other hand, the people who have the money cannot obtain the additional butter or bacon they want without the additional coupons. If the amount has been fixed on the assumption that everyone is to receive the same share, then there will be unsold quantities lying in the shops. The only way to get this used is for those who are too poor to purchase the amounts to trade their coupons, or for the shopkeepers to sell surreptitiously additional quantities to those who can afford to purchase them. *It is impossible to have two systems of rationing, one by price*

<sup>1</sup> A new method of food price control was introduced at the end of January. It was first applied in the Dried Fruits (Maximum Prices) Order, 1940. The previous order fixed maximum prices at every stage, but under the new regulations every shopkeeper had to calculate his own maximum prices. The Ministry, as first-hand seller, permitted an addition of 7s a hundredweight to its charge between first-hand and retailer (for division between dealer and secondary wholesaler). The basic price, plus this 7s, plus actual transport costs, was the shopkeeper's buying price, to which he was allowed to add a maximum margin of profit—it averaged 1½d a pound—to find his selling price.—*Manchester Guardian*, January 30, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> A British Institute of Public Opinion survey carried out early in March showed that at least 20 per cent of the population could not afford to buy the full amount of the ration.—*News Chronicle*, March 11, 1940.

*and one by coupons, operating in the same field without confusion, waste, and evasion of regulations*

"The purpose of rationing is to ensure that every person will get the same amount. This will not be the case, even under the most elaborate system of rationing, unless money is rationed as well."

Orr and Lubbock further point out that the public may welcome rationing "as an emergency nationalization of supplies" but a system of rationing by amount, with fixed prices outside the purchasing power of a large section of the people, is not in any sense nationalization, and may give the public a false sense of security. The public did actually welcome rationing, in the hope that it would ensure fairer distribution and lower prices, but a section of the Press opposed it bitterly for reasons that were not quite clear<sup>1</sup>—they were certainly not those given in *Feeding the People in War-time*.

Orr and Lubbock held that rationing should be kept in reserve, and only applied in the face of some unforeseen disaster. "In that event, however, there should be no confusion between price regulation and coupon regulation. Rationed food should be issued either free or at a price which everybody could pay, so that every person, irrespective of his wealth or poverty, would get the rationed amount." The morale and powers of endurance on which victory will depend cannot be maintained unless the whole population is on a diet good enough to maintain it in health, but at the beginning of the war nearly one-third of the population was living on an inadequate

<sup>1</sup> "The public should revolt against the food rationing system, that dreadful and terrible iniquity which some of the Ministers want to adopt."

"There is no necessity for the trouble and expense of rationing, merely because there may be a shortage of this or that inessential commodity."

"Why should old women be forced to wait here and there before the shops for their supplies?"

"This form of folly is difficult and almost impossible to understand"—*Daily Express*, November 21, 1939

diet, being unable to afford the protective foods, such as milk, other dairy products, vegetables, fruit, and eggs. In the opinion of Orr and Lubbock the only way to prevent enormous rises in food prices is by subsidy, and since it is impracticable to subsidize all foods, only those which are absolutely essential must be selected. "With sufficient milk, vegetables, and potatoes, there need be no malnutrition. With sufficient bread, fat (butter or margarine), potatoes, and oatmeal, there will be no starvation." The basic foods should be produced or imported in large enough quantities to make rationing unnecessary, and their prices should be fixed at a level within the reach of the poorest third of the community. The country produces enough milk to raise the consumption of the poorest third from the present level of  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint per day to  $\frac{2}{3}$  pint, the level among the wealthiest two-thirds. They suggest, therefore, that milk should be sold on the cash-and-carry basis at about 1s a gallon.

An extension of the allotments system might enable half the population to be partly self-supporting in vegetables. The difficulty of obtaining cheap vegetables in winter and spring could be surmounted by subsidizing canning factories which would work at full capacity in summer and autumn. Subsidies should be used to increase production and consumption of potatoes, which are of "special value to health" and provide "the best insurance against food shortage".<sup>1</sup> By bringing into cultivation 4,000,000 acres to replace those that have been given over to grass since 1918, and by consuming more home-produced and less imported food, "we could reduce our food imports from the pre-war level of about twenty million tons to about five or six millions, which is sufficient to provide the wheat, sugar, and fats which we cannot produce at home. Without importing any

<sup>1</sup> German consumption of potatoes is twice that of Britain.

feeding-stuffs we could still produce at home the greater part of our beef and mutton, and a considerable part of the eggs and bacon we produced in peace-time. We would also have some fish, fruit, and, in smaller amounts, some other foods." Given maximum home production and equal distribution, "we can fight the war indefinitely without any fear of starvation, or even of food shortage."

*The greatest difficulty is not to maintain the supply, but to ensure that the poorest third of the population gets its proper share.*" The additional subsidies necessary to ensure this might amount to £100,000,000 a year. The benefits accruing from the improvement in the nation's health would more than justify this expenditure. But Orr and Lubbock give an even more convincing argument in favour of their scheme. "Working-class families spend nearly half of their total income on food. Therefore adjusting the price to purchasing power now and pegging it at that level, no matter how the value of money changes, will be the most effective method of preventing the vicious spiral which, if allowed to go unchecked, will end in inflation and national bankruptcy."

The Ministry of Food had already instituted a measure of subsidy at the end of February £1,000,000 a week was being used to keep down the prices of flour, meat, and milk. The Government claimed that, owing to this, and other price-control measures, the rise in the cost of food in the first six months had been 16 per cent, compared with 22 per cent in the comparable period of the last war. This rise was due mainly to increases in insurance and freight charges. The official figures were challenged by the Opposition,<sup>1</sup> one of whose spokesmen, Mr John Morgan, alleged that food prices had risen by 36 4 per cent up to February, as against 24 per cent in the same

<sup>1</sup> In a debate on April 2, 1940

period of the last war. The Food Minister questioned his comparison of prices, declaring that it set the 1939-40 increase in wholesale prices against the 1914 increase in retail prices. A third estimate of the price increase—20·7 per cent—was put forward by Mr A V Alexander, spokesman of the Co-operative Movement, who also stated that the following percentage increases had occurred in retail prices: Granulated sugar 72, cube sugar 56, bacon 25 to 34, English and Scottish new laid eggs 108, imported eggs 68, British beef 16 to 42, potatoes 29. He said that the Government's policy of refraining from controlling the livestock market until January and then fixing too high a price had caused unnecessarily high prices.

## 7 FOOD PRODUCTION

"In contrast to the ordinary business of the farmer and gardener—the winning of a livelihood from the land—food production, in the sense in which it is used in this volume, may be defined as the art of raising from soil the greatest possible quantity of energy in the form of wholesome foodstuffs."—Sir T H Middleton, *Food Production in War* (Economic and Social History of the World War)

"The food question ultimately decided the issue of this war." So writes Mr Lloyd George in the fascinating chapter<sup>1</sup> of his *Memoirs* that deals with food supplies. He goes on to illustrate the remarkable anomaly that, to begin with, none of the belligerent nations had a sufficient realization of the importance of the subject. Germany was so oblivious to the danger of famine that in 1915 she was selling grain to Holland, the Russians took immense pains to supply forage for their cavalry (which rendered no decisive service in the war), and neglected to fill the empty bellies of their civilians, "the French

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XLIV.



idea of war, that is, of a purely defensive war in which the whole nation would answer the call to arms to resist invasion, did not even admit of the maintenance of regular agricultural production",<sup>1</sup> "here in Britain, whilst our food supplies from overseas were becoming more and more precarious, we were allowing our own fertile soil to go out of cultivation without making any effort to keep up its yield of essential food".<sup>2</sup> The explanation of the general neglect of this vital war front was to be found in the assumption that war on so colossal a scale could not last long. So obsessed were all the warring Powers with their belief in a lightning war that even in 1915 the military authorities would not consider the "wasting" of man-power on the harvests of 1916, 1917, and 1918. The historian of French war-time agriculture quoted above remarks that "it is difficult to realize to-day the extent to which belief in the short duration of the war prevailed"—it prevailed equally in France, in Germany, and in England, despite Kitchener's acclaimed prophecy of three years. Had Germany not been at one with the Allies in this there would have been no Versailles—a lesson branded ineffaceably upon the memory of the present German Government. At the beginning of this war it was generally assumed that the British Government had learnt the food production lesson as thoroughly as the Nazis, that they had decided on a policy and had devised plans which would be put into operation the moment the armed forces should be mobilized. They themselves were at pains to make the public and the farmers believe that this was so. Repeated assurances were given that all was quietly correct on the food front, that nothing had been left to chance. Neverthe-

<sup>1</sup> Michel Augé-Laribé, *Agriculture and Food Supply in France During the War, 1927*

<sup>2</sup> David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*

less, during the second quarter many powerful voices were raised in protest against the alleged inadequacy of the food production measures taken by the Government. Some of these criticisms are hereunder recorded.

As was noted in *The First Quarter*,<sup>1</sup> pig and poultry keepers were instructed by the Government to plan their production for the first year of the war on the assumption that the supply of imported feeding stuffs would be reduced by one-third. From this it was naturally inferred by farmers and the general public that the Government had taken steps to ensure a two-thirds supply of imported feeding stuffs, and since everyone anticipated a U-boat campaign against shipping severe enough to prevent a two-thirds supply regularly entering the country during the first year, it was assumed that big reserves of feeding stuffs had been laid by during the anxious months since Prague—or even since the first intoxication of Munich had subsided.

Before the end of November there were signs that nothing like the two-thirds were coming through. In December, according to the Government's own admission, it was only possible to release 30 per cent of normal requirements of feeding stuffs. Even this proportion was not properly distributed over the country, so that while livestock farmers in some areas received nearly their normal allowance, others were left for long periods with none or practically none.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the plans which many farmers had formulated on the information

<sup>1</sup> Page 182

<sup>2</sup> The Director of the National Institute of Poultry Husbandry said that the favoured few at the one extreme had received almost normal supplies, while at the other extreme had been all too many who, through failure to get supplies, had been driven to give up their farms in despair, with loss of capital and then means of subsistence. Even when feeding stuffs were available they were exorbitantly expensive. Grain which cost £5 or £5 10s a ton in August, 1939, was being sold for £19 in January. In February, after control had been instituted, it still cost £15

given them by the Government, had to be scrapped.<sup>1</sup> It was only then made known that there were no reserves of feeding stuffs, all available storage space having been filled with wheat. Towards the end of January it was claimed that supplies had been raised to 66 per cent of normal requirements (but several weeks afterwards many farmers were complaining that the situation had not perceptibly eased), and further, it was promised that this proportion would be available until the end of March, provided that there was no worsening in the shipping situation.

No disinterested person could have quarrelled with the Government if, on September 3, livestock farmers had been informed that it was not the Government's policy to maintain the pig and poultry population at anything like its pre-war level, or to encourage the wasteful production of high-quality beef and lamb. They would have been justified in holding the view shared by many experts that, in time of war, we cannot afford to maintain luxury standards in food quality at enormous expense of foreign exchange and shipping space, and therefore in telling pig and poultry farmers that they must drastically reduce their stock.

But the Government did not do this. They gave livestock farmers to understand that their activities were essential to the country, and they encouraged them to carry on business almost as usual. They "fixed differential prices for beef which stimulate the wasting of foodstuffs in the production of the highest quality" and prices for fat lamb, which are an inducement to the flock-

<sup>1</sup> In January the number of chickens being reared in some districts was not more than 5 per cent of the normal.

<sup>2</sup> "The official excuse that all our warehouses were filled with human feeding stuffs only makes things worse. For we have under our eyes everywhere the great empty barns which used to hold the harvests of England's vanished ploughlands"—G. R. Y. RADCLIFFE, *The Times*, April 8, 1940.

master to produce this extravagant article”<sup>1</sup> And while the Minister of Agriculture promised subsidies to those who would produce wheat for human consumption, the Ministry of Food earmarked 40,000 tons of it for the chickens,<sup>2</sup> and the Government “called upon” millers and distributing dealers to issue normal pre-war supplies of chick food and wheat for poultry

Dr Orwin said that no use was being made of experts in the sciences of nutrition and food production to decide what the country could afford to consume<sup>3</sup> “After six months everyone with money in his pocket is living as well as he did before the war. He need not deprive himself of a single luxury, nor need he change his habits in a single direction. But it cannot continue.” The places of the experts who in the last war were called upon to give scientific advice on diet and rationing to Lord Rhondda at the Ministry of Food, and

<sup>1</sup> Dr C S Orwin, *The Times*, March 5, 1940

<sup>2</sup> “The ordinary man may think that when wheat is fed to stock the loss of human food will be made up by the pork or beef or eggs that it is turned into. The question is how much will be recovered. This is known with some exactitude. Under good management a pig may produce a pound of pork from five pounds of wheat, hens on their best behaviour may realize about the same ratio of a pound of eggs for five pounds of corn, but for a pound of beef 10 or even 20 pound of wheat may be consumed. Neither the pound of pork or beef nor the eight eggs have the life-sustaining power of even one pound of wheat, much less, therefore, than of the five or more consumed in producing it. Are we, then, possessed of such a superabundance of wheat that it can be spared for the wasteful conversion of human food that animal feeding involves?”—SIR DANIEL HALL, *The Times*, March 27, 1940

<sup>3</sup> One of the chief Ministerial apologists explained “that if Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith decides on a future ‘big offensive for increased production,’ then ‘at no distant date’ Sir Reginald ‘will’ call in the experts to help him. This hope for a future effort would have been timely a year ago after Prague. It might have been permissible six months ago on the declaration of war. To-day it is an admission of complete failure by the Ministry to plan an adequately comprehensive campaign of food production.”—LORD ASTOR, *The Times*, April 9, 1940

to Lord Lee at the Food Production Department,<sup>1</sup> were now, according to Dr Orwin, taken by representatives of business <sup>2</sup>

In September the Ministry of Agriculture had announced the intention of bringing an additional 2,000,000 acres under the plough within a year. A similar expansion had only been achieved in four years during the last war, but in 1939 our arable acreage had decreased by 2,250,000 acres since 1914, and by 4,000,000 since 1918, while millions of acres of grassland<sup>3</sup> had lost their fertility. After six months of war a total of 11,855,000 acres, including about 1,250,000 acres of grassland,<sup>4</sup> had been ploughed, as compared with 14,300,000 acres in the same period of the last war.

The agricultural policy had been severely attacked in the House, and those who had followed the debates were given the impression that nothing in the way of criticism and condemnation could have been left unsaid. They were wrong. The most vigorous attack on the Government's food production campaign was made, not in Westminster, but in Printing House Square. The fact that *The Times* considered it necessary to sponsor Mr A. P. McDougall's pointed analysis of the food position was taken as evidence that the Government's policy had

<sup>1</sup> Great interest was aroused in this country by the publication of a report on an enquiry into food supplies by a voluntary committee of German scientific men (the Eltzbacher Committee), and as a result the Royal Society's Food (War) Committee undertook a similar enquiry in Britain in 1916. The facts it elicited were of "much value in determining the precise line of action to be taken in the production, importation, and distribution of food" (Middleton, *op cit*). Later, an inter-Allied Scientific Commission was created.

<sup>2</sup> This was also Lord Astor's view. Comparing the present Food Ministry with that set up by Lord Rhondda in the last war, he got the strong impression that "vested interests and trading interests have too much power and influence now"—*Manchester Guardian*, March 18, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> The total area of grassland was 15,000,000 acres.

<sup>4</sup> By March 15, 1,370,000 acres of grassland had been ploughed.

caused misgiving in not a few loyal breasts Mr McDougall doubted that the critics in the House realized how little our production for 1940 had actually increased. Most of them would have been satisfied if the ploughing campaign could have been more vigorously prosecuted. But what did the increased acreage represent in food value? According to Mr McDougall, if 1,200,000 acres were ploughed and seeded for this year's crop, it would mean an increased value of £3,427,000, *little more than 1 per cent of our output, or 0.04 of all our requirements—"sufficient food for a day and a half"*<sup>1</sup>. But these figures did not tell the whole story. Calculated in terms of pig-meat production, the cutting down of supplies of imported feeding stuffs involved a decrease in livestock production of £60,500,000. "The result of the first year's war programme is therefore not the increase that we had hoped for, but a serious fall."

Mr McDougall claimed to have demonstrated "the folly of depending for increased production solely on a ploughing-up policy which, in itself, is woefully inadequate."

It was said by many critics that owing to lack of imagination and preparatory planning, the ploughing-up campaign had been carried out in an uneconomic way, and that little had been done to increase the productivity of existing ploughlands and grasslands. Lord Astor complained<sup>2</sup> that, "Ploughing up approximately 10 per cent of grass county by county takes insufficient account of the enormous regional variations in soil, of differences in types of farm, in the size of enclosures, in methods of farming, in availability of implements, and individual experience. Much of the conversion is unnecessarily

<sup>1</sup> The Minister of Agriculture, replying to Mr McDougall, claimed that, instead of 1,200,000 acres, he should have said 1,370,000, which would have provided an extra half a day's food supply.

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, March 18, 1940.

uneconomic. And, in addition, large areas of marginal lands which should be ploughed and put either into cereals or regrassed at once are not being tackled," because the farmers could not get the expensive implements and skilled labour necessary. During our period there was a shortage of tractors and disc-harrows.<sup>1</sup> The Ministry boasted that a great national reserve of tractors had been formed months before war broke out. In September, 1939 there were about 1,400 Government-owned tractors, and some 50,000 in private hands. Several months later the number in private hands had increased by 5,000. Thus, to plough the additional 2,000,000 acres there was a net increase of 6,400 machines, but at least three times as many were required.<sup>2</sup> However, even had the additional machines been available, it would have been impossible to provide drivers for them, no Ministry having taken any steps to train any.<sup>3</sup>

So qualified and unbiased an expert as the Director of the Oxford Institute for Research in Agricultural Engineering,<sup>4</sup> took an even less rosy view of the tractor situation. Replying to the Minister's statement that there were 53,000 tractors in the United Kingdom in June 1939, and that by the summer of 1940 there were expected to be 70,000 at work, he pointed out that at least 12,000 of the original 53,000 were overdue for replacement, and of the 17,000 extra machines, about 9,000 would have been bought even if the war had not broken out. Moreover, the tractors were badly distributed: two-thirds were in about twenty counties in the south and east, leaving only one-third for the remaining forty counties—which contained the greater part of the extra acres to be ploughed.

<sup>1</sup> Machines for preparing seed-beds

<sup>2</sup> A. P. McDougall, *The Times*, March 26, 1940

<sup>3</sup> A tractor driver's training takes from four to six weeks

<sup>4</sup> Mr S. J. Wright

The urgent task of increasing the output of existing arable and grassland had been neglected. Heavy manuring with lime, synthetic nitrogen, potash, and phosphate rock, coupled with proper drainage, would have increased production by at least 15 per cent. Lord McGowan mentioned<sup>1</sup> three ways of increasing production quickly

- (a) The new method of making silage, especially from grassland. This would help largely to replace imported livestock foods
- (b) Grass drying—applicable mainly to larger farms—would also do this, and moreover provide a concentrated food that can be easily transported
- (c) Treatment of straw by caustic soda makes a valuable feeding stuff out of relatively useless material

These three methods had been developed by the agricultural research staff of Imperial Chemical Industries over the past ten years, and their soundness was accepted, but none of them had been included in the plans formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry had also omitted sufficiently to impress upon farmers the virtues of nitrogen, phosphates, and potash. This did not surprise the critics, in view of the Government's neglect of technical knowledge. "Leading experts have been ignored or only partly used. Technical institutes are closed or partly closed, instead of being doubly utilized."<sup>2</sup>

The Agricultural (Miscellaneous War Provisions) Bill was presented in January, 1940. Its main clause dealt with land drainage schemes, half the cost of which was to be borne by the Exchequer. Mr Lloyd George reckoned that 3,500,000 acres needed arterial drainage, and another 3,500,000 needed field drainage, seven millions in all.<sup>3</sup> He said that the Bill would do nothing

<sup>1</sup> In *The Times*, March 29, 1940

<sup>2</sup> Lord Astor, *Manchester Guardian*, March 18, 1940

<sup>3</sup> He later revised his estimate to 10,000,000 acres



materially to help the situation, it was a ludicrously small contribution to such a large problem

The Bill was not, in Mr Lloyd George's opinion, a Ministry of Agriculture Bill at all, it was a Treasury Bill. The Minister was in earnest about his job, but in this Bill he was fettered in every limb, when he was trying to move from one clause to another you could hear the clank of the chains fixed on him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The cost of certain drainage work in Scotland was estimated at £5,000 "Prodigious" Help to cottage gardeners in buying fertilizers was put at not over £1,000 "Now that is real profligacy" Bitterly he spoke of the Chancellor's "stony, sterile, indifference," and said, "You cannot dig for victory with a pair of Treasury scissors" Holding up a copy of the Bill, Mr Lloyd George added "If this had been produced by the Treasury in 1917 it would not have had a moment's consideration, I would have flung it into the waste-paper basket. It is no use calling upon the people of this country for a new programme of armaments, to sacrifice not only their riches, luxuries, comforts, and business, and the lives of the young men, if through stubbornness, human prejudice, and lack of vision you neglect one indispensable contribution to the winning of the war, and to find yourselves suddenly faced, through hunger, with the inevitable doom of a humiliating surrender because you have forgotten one vital thing"

Sir Samuel Hoare replied that the Bill did not represent the whole of the Government's policy and that they intended shortly to introduce an agricultural wages bill, but he failed completely to put the mind of the House at rest <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of the Bill's proposals was to charge farmers 5 per cent on short-term loans for agricultural purposes. During a later reading, when a Conservative amendment that the rate of interest should not exceed the bank rate by more than one per cent, was refused, the Unionist Member for Frome, Mrs Tate, "found it difficult to control her language"

Mr Lloyd George enumerated six objects which the Government should have in view (1) the farmer must know that if he doubled his production he would have an assured market for his produce, (2) the price paid must recover the cost of production, which it did not now, (3) the State must subsidize liberally all well-thought-out drainage schemes, (4) the State must take active measures to see that there is an ample supply of lime and fertilizers, (5) cheap capital must be available to enable the cultivator to bring the soil to a higher pitch of fertility, not only by drainage and fertilization but by machinery, livestock, and otherwise, (6) an adequate supply of labour to carry out this programme.

Valuable constructive criticism was offered by Sir John Orr and Mr David Lubbock<sup>1</sup>. The farmer, they pointed out, was being urged to produce more but was not being told what additional foods to produce or what prices he would get for them. The indiscriminate ploughing up of old grassland was uneconomic, since there were some farms where 50 per cent of the grass could be profitably ploughed and others in which it would be a mistake to plough any. Much of the grassland ploughed up might, when put under oats, produce less food than if it had been left in grass. Grass, it must not be forgotten, is by far the most important feeding stuff we have. "An acre of good pasture will give 5-6 tons of grass silage. This is equivalent in feeding value to a ton of oats which is about the average yield of an acre. In addition to the silage, the pasture gives a good deal of grazing in the autumn and a little in the early spring when it is most valuable."

In emphasizing the importance of grassland, Orr and Lubbock bring back memories of the bitter criticisms of the plough policy in the Four Years' War. Sir Thomas

<sup>1</sup> In *Feeding the People in War-time*

Middleton<sup>1</sup> tells us that, "Many agriculturists believed, and still believe, that while the conversion of grassland to corn growing led to an increase in grain, there was a corresponding loss of food in the form of meat and milk "

In his Presidential address to the Royal Statistical Society in November, 1921, Sir Henry Rew, who had previously been Secretary to the Ministry of Food, made the following remarkable denunciation of the ploughing-up campaign of 1916-18 "I claim that an examination of the statistics, so far as they are available, points to the conclusion that a larger quantity of food was being produced at the outbreak of war than at any previous period

*There was no doubt a set-back to food production during the War By a special effort the amount of cereal food was increased, but there was a marked reduction of other kinds of food, meat and milk particularly "*

On the question of what additional crops should be grown, Orr and Lubbock point out that grain does not give the largest yield of food per acre Carrots and turnips give a higher yield, kale, sugar-beet and potatoes give twice as much Sugar-beet and potatoes are particularly valuable, and it would be a mistake to increase the acreage under wheat at their expense The order of priority should be potatoes, vegetables, fodder crops to replace imported feeding stuffs, sugar-beet and grain (wheat, oats or barley)

In considering livestock production it must be remembered that animals vary in their capacity for transforming feeding stuffs into human food Since the cow is by far the most active in this respect, and since milk is of greater importance than any other animal product, the first object should be the increase of milk production, by grass, grass-silage, hay and fodder crops At the same time, the production of bacon and eggs should be

<sup>1</sup> *Op cit*

reduced to a level which can be maintained with the concentrates (grains and meals) that are surplus to human needs, and the use of concentrates for the production of beef and mutton should be reduced to a minimum

Having decided what crops and animal products it is desirable to produce, the question of how to ensure their production arises. The only way to do this, short of Sovietizing the industry, is to offer the farmer guaranteed prices which will induce him to produce what is needed, and in the right quantities<sup>1</sup>. "We can get our different foodstuffs in the proportions we want them if we adjust the prices offered for each in the right proportion to the others". The use of feeding stuffs could be similarly controlled by price. So as to avoid an immediate post-war slump, the price offered to the farmer for his goods ought to be maintained for at least three years after the war.

Orr and Lubbock criticized the method of price-fixing which had been in force during the first six months as unlikely to give good results. Prices were allowed "to jump about". Thus the price of oats rose from below 20s a quarter to 50s, and was finally fixed at 39s, which was far above production cost. On the other hand, the price of potatoes had remained stationary. "If the two prices remain at their present level we shall have a tremendous increase in oats next year. Some of

<sup>1</sup> "the consumer has recently [1923] attributed the high cost of food to some undefined delinquency on the part of the farmer. But the farmer is neither a philanthropist who sends to market only those commodities in which energy is cheap, nor an autocrat who orders the consumer to expend his money wisely on the articles which provide the best value. The farmer is in no sense a food controller, his business is to provide what consumers demand, he estimates the demand by the price offered, and he naturally offers for sale those commodities which pay him best. If, therefore, the consumer selects foods which are expensive, those expensive foods will be produced" and *vice-versa* (Middleton, *op cit*)

the land that might have gone into potatoes will go into oats, and it is doubtful whether we shall get the potatoes we need ”

“Of all the subjects occupying the attention of the Agricultural Departments in the period of preparation for the 1915 harvest, labour was the most important ”<sup>1</sup> Again in 1940 the labour problem was peculiarly difficult To begin with, there were 250,000 fewer agricultural workers than at the outbreak of the Four Years’ War According to one Member of Parliament, we had almost reached the stage when the farms were manned by old-age pensioners and schoolchildren The Minister of Agriculture was making plans to enlist the services in the agricultural field of youths of from 16 to 20. By the end of our period the trained strength of the Women’s Land Army was 6000 In view of the difficulty of keeping men on the land when much higher wages were offered them in other industries, the Government decided to strengthen the powers of the Agricultural Wages Board in order that a national minimum wage could be established During the period under review each county had its own minimum rates fixed by a committee composed of representatives of farmers and farm workers, sitting with three independent members appointed by the Minister of Agriculture The rates fixed by these committees varied by as much as 8s a week, according to local conditions The minimum wage rates averaged about 38s a week, but the actual earnings were possibly 41s or 42s There were some who suggested giving skilled men a national minimum of 60s a week This would mean increasing farming costs by about 15 per cent and would necessitate increased subsidies

**Allotments** A special allotments co-ordinating committee was set up to encourage the production of “cabbages from con-

<sup>1</sup> Middleton, *op cit*

crete and broad beans from brickbats” The number of allotments at the end of 1939 was something over 900,000, which it was hoped soon to increase by half a million. In their reports on the allotments scheme in England and Wales the Society of Friends “pointed out that for an annual outlay of about £50,000, half of which comes from the unemployed themselves and one-quarter each from the State and from public subscriptions, the families of the unemployed had grown produce for their own use which, if purchased, would have cost them some £600,000. But this was not all the benefit. The vegetables grown on these allotments would not, in fact, have all been purchased by these impoverished families. If not grown by themselves, it is unlikely that more than a small percentage of the supply would have been consumed.

Vegetables, when used to supplement the white bread and margarine which supply the bulk of the food of impoverished families, have a special value in making good deficiencies in diet which retard growth and injure health, thus it is not metaphorically only that the seed supplied by the Friends and the allotment societies may be claimed to yield ‘an hundredfold’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Before the war about 1,000,000 tons of foodstuffs were thrown into dustbins every year. The problem of how to use this “waste” was magnificently solved by the dustment of the Borough of Tottenham. A herd of 42 pigs was obtained on December 6 and housed in modern hygienic piggeries erected by the dustmen in their spare time on vacant land at the refuse disposal works. Previous to the pigs’ arrival the dustmen had asked householders, café and canteen proprietors, etc., to keep their “bits and pieces” in a separate container for collection when the usual refuse collection was made. The scheme was an immediate success. During the first

Waste  
Food

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, February 22, 1940

three weeks not only did they obtain ample food for their own pigs but they collected and sold 10 tons of surplus food to other pig dealers. The dustmen later equipped their vehicles with pig-food containers in which they were able to collect about 20 tons of food a week. This was more than their animals required and they sold the surplus at 35s a ton. By January, 1940, there were seventeen local authorities who ran pig farms in which the animals were fed mainly on waste food collected in their areas.

**Crop  
Returns**

The areas under barley, oats, beans, and the hay crops, were greater in 1939 than in 1938, but the acreages of other crops were smaller. There was a sharp decline in the acreage under wheat, which had shown an exceptionally large increase in 1938, and mixed corn also showed a substantial decrease. The decrease in the area of seeds hay, which in 1938 fell to an exceptionally low level, was partly regained in 1939, and a recovery also occurred in the case of meadow hay, which in 1938 had shown the lowest acreage since 1921.

With the exception of wheat, barley, and peas, crop yields per acre were higher than in 1938. The yield of oats, which slightly exceeded that of the previous year, was the highest recorded, that of potatoes equalled the record yield of 1938.

The estimated total production of wheat, barley, mixed corn, peas, potatoes, and turnips and swedes decreased as compared with the previous year, that of peas being the lowest on record. Oats, beans, and mangolds showed increases, as did also the hay crops, which had fallen to an abnormally low figure in 1938. The following preliminary statement<sup>1</sup> shows the estimated produce and acreage of the crops in England and Wales in 1939, compared with 1938.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, January 13, 1940.

Crops	TOTAL PRODUCE		ACREAGE	
	1939	1938	1939	1938
	Thous of tons	Thous of tons	Acres	Acres
Wheat	1,555	1,855	1,682,616	1,830,261
Barley	794	803	910,073	885,499
Oats	1,119	1,069	1,358,008	1,300,530
Mixed corn	72	72	82,781	92,240
Seeds hay	1,700	1,281	1,302,858	1,184,082
Meadow hay	4,535	3,131	4,611,564	4,229,308
Beans for stock-feeding or seed	109	106	132,968	129,817
Peas for stock-feeding or seed	23	30	36,800	38,153
Potatoes	3,312	3,486	453,976	474,786
Turnips and swedes	4,947	5,081	394,249	421,190
Mangolds	3,938	3,599	208,891	212,531

The Fish Control Board, whose brief and unhappy <sup>Fisher</sup> career was recorded in *The First Quarter*,<sup>1</sup> was succeeded by a Fish Advisory Committee, set up to assist the Food Ministry on questions of supply, distribution, and prices. It held its first meeting in January, 1940. The shortage of fish continued throughout the second quarter, and prices remained correspondingly high.

Admiralty demands on trawlers<sup>2</sup> caused vast unemployment in the fishing and allied trades. It is said that every fisherman makes work for four landsmen in auxiliary occupations, such as sorting and packing, fish curing, ice making. But not by any means all of the fishing trades workers whom the war deprived of their normal occupation remained without work. A great proportion of the men put out to sea again in trawlers that had become minesweepers, and some of the women who had formerly made nets for trawlers now made them for camouflaging guns.

<sup>1</sup> Page 184

<sup>2</sup> Hull, for instance, lost nearly all her 750-800-ton deep-sea trawlers to the Navy, and Grimsby's North Sea fleet of 400 was cut down by half.



There were many complaints that, to quote Mr Richard Law, "the incidence of the sacrifice which is being borne by the fishing community is grotesquely uneven. There are some ports, such as Hull, which have been devastated, there are some ports which are working short time, and there are others which are busier or more prosperous than ever before. Hull's difficulties could be eased without diminishing in any way the contribution which her fishing fleet is making to our security."

Mr Law took the failure to remedy this inequality as evidence of a grave defect in the present machinery of Government. The troubles of the fishing industry were the concern of half-a-dozen different departments—the Admiralty, the Ministries of Agriculture, Food, Shipping, Economic Warfare, and, possibly, the Treasury—but there was no one department which had either the will or the power to deal with them. "No doubt there is a remedy, and no doubt—when the pressure of actual distress has become sufficiently acute—it will be found."

But I cannot help feeling that it is time that people began to ask themselves whether it is going to be possible to win this war with a Governmental machine which is incapable of correcting an abuse (or even of knowing that it exists) until it has become quite literally intolerable, and whether there is not more to be said than the Prime Minister will admit for the machinery of the War Cabinet as it operated in the last War.<sup>1</sup>

The fishermen who escaped unemployment and remained fishermen were given £1 a week as war risk money, and this brought the net weekly earnings of Grimsby men to £2 18s 6d. They certainly earned every penny of it, since there was no nominally civil occupation in which men ran such risk of death. One of the most heartening manifestations in the first six months was the

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 18, 1940

reply of our East Coast fishermen to the Nazis' attempts to terrorize them into remaining in port. There were fishing crews who, having put into harbour to replace the nets they had been forced to cut away when the death-dealing Heinkels swooped over them, immediately set out to sea again to carry on their work. There were tiny fishing craft which disdained to cut their nets at the sound of the bombing plane, but instead used their solitary gun to such effect that the attacking craft turned its nose towards Borkum again.

## 8 TRANSPORT

The financial arrangements under which the Govern-  
ment was to control the railways were announced early in February. The receipts and expenses of the four main line companies and of London Transport, which had been under Government control since September 1, were to be pooled. Out of the pool each of the railways was to receive as a minimum the average of its net revenue for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937. The L P T B was to be paid a minimum amounting to its net revenue for the year ended June 30, 1939. These payments, amounting to about £40,000,000, were to be guaranteed by the Government, and were to accrue to the companies in the following percentages: L M S, 34, L N E R, 23, G W R, 16, S R, 16, L P T B, 11. If the amount of the pool exceeded the guarantee in revenue the undertakings were to be allowed to retain in full the first £3,500,000 of excess. Beyond that point the Exchequer would take one half of the net revenue until the undertakings reached their standard revenue,<sup>1</sup> after which the whole of the balance would be taken by the Exchequer.

<sup>1</sup> Standard revenue means the standard revenue ascertained under the Railways Act, 1921.

In no case would the net revenue accruing to a company be allowed to exceed its standard revenue. The railway companies were to continue to work as private concerns, although under Government control, and, in the matter of charges, to treat Government departments like ordinary commercial firms <sup>1</sup>

The average return on the £1,200,000,000 capital of the five undertakings will be 3·3 per cent from the guaranteed minimum, with the extra £3,500,000 it will be 3·6 per cent, and when the maximum of £68,500,000 is reached the average interest will be 4·7 per cent. By comparison the railways as a whole paid an average return of approximately 4 per cent in 1929, one of the best peace-time years <sup>2</sup>

The main criticism levelled against this agreement was that it facilitated an increase in the cost of transport <sup>3</sup>. It was thought by many that the main line companies should not have been allowed to ignore the comparatively bad year 1938 in estimating their basic profits, and have thus been permitted more than £7,000,000 above their 1938 revenue as a guaranteed profit under war conditions. Mr Herbert Morrison saw in the agreement evidence that the Government clearly contemplated the possibility, even the probability, that the railway companies were to be put into a definitely better position than they were at the outbreak of hostilities. Mr Morrison thought that if that was so, the Government had taken a grave responsibility, because it laid it down that these great statutory undertakings had the right to earn higher profits and dividends as a result of the war. If railway directors should argue that it was highly speculative and it was doubtful if the companies would get such increased

<sup>1</sup> In the Four Years' War the Government guaranteed a net revenue, and made no payment for military and naval transport

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, February 8, 1940

<sup>3</sup> *The Economist*

profits, he was bound to answer that the Stock Exchange did not take that view of what was happening. Ever since it was known that this agreement was coming—and it looked as if somebody knew something about it a few days before the House was suddenly told—railway stocks started moving up.

The view of the railway interests was expressed at the annual general meeting of the LMS Company on March 16, 1940, by a member of the Railway Group in the House of Commons. "It was admitted," he said, "that the terms were not over-generous, but it would be generally agreed that it would not be right for such terms to be over-generous in war-time."

Despite the serious congestion on the railways nothing <sup>Canal</sup> was done in the first six months to increase the usefulness of the canal system. During the Four Years' War the canals were brought under unified control, and their income was guaranteed. It is difficult to understand why this had not been done again. Sir Frederick J. West, chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal, speaking of their Bridgwater Canal undertaking said: "Canal carriers are faced with rising costs, both in wages and materials, which they have to bear unaided, and in many cases they cannot afford to carry at existing rates, so that they are compelled either to relinquish the traffic or to charge higher rates with the risk of losing it. If these conditions persist, canal carriers are in danger of being forced out of business."

The following relief measures were suggested by Mr. George Cadbury<sup>1</sup>. The Government to take control of all main waterway routes, as it did in the last War. Some form of guarantee to be given to canal owners and operators, as was done in the last War, and is now being done with the railways. Income and expenditure on all

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 13, 1940

routes to be pooled so that those routes which are badly hit by war conditions may be compensated. Railway-owned canals to be brought into the scheme. Mr. Cadbury's proposals were supported by the Traders' Co-ordinating Committee on Transport (Federation of British Industries).

The *Spectator* recalled the fact that in 1913, when the canals were threatened with economic extinction, a certain Mr. Neville Chamberlain had written to that journal to urge that "no real improvement can be carried out without unification of ownership, and that no private individual or syndicate can obtain the statutory powers to bring this about. The State alone can replace the private companies, trusts, and railways which now own or control different sections of the main through waterway routes, and that is why we are compelled to advocate State interference."

**Road  
Transport**

The number of mechanically propelled road vehicles registered for the first time in Great Britain in November, 1939, was 10,070, compared with 33,833 in November, 1938; and in January, 1940, it was 11,746, compared with 40,001 in January, 1939.

The plight of the distributing and servicing side of the motor industry caused concern, and it was widely felt that some at least of its misfortunes might have been avoided had the Government set up adequate machinery for the co-ordination of the economic side of our war effort. Before the war the garages employed some 250,000 persons, many of them highly skilled technicians. The industry had an invested capital of £150,000,000, and its 16,000 retail concerns provided a petrol storage capacity of 25,000,000 gallons. Petrol rationing and the drastic increase in the horse-power tax dealt the garages cruel blows, but it would not have been reasonable to demand that either of these measures should be rescinded

solely in the interests of the motor industry. On the other hand, the garages could rightfully demand that, if possible, they should be saved from total extinction. The Secretary of the Motor Trade War Executive asked the following questions<sup>1</sup> "Why need the Service Departments set up further redundant petrol supply depots of their own, often next door to existing efficiently equipped trade depots? Why is not full use being made of the surplus petrol storage capacity here available, especially since a well-spaced country-wide distributive network of petrol supply points must be a desirable feature in the event of air raids? No wonder that we hear of tankers lying idle in ports and estuaries awaiting discharge until Service storage space is found. Why, again, should these civilian garages be debarred from use for repair work by Service vehicles when occasion arises? Their efficiency is not under question, because it has now been ruled that Service vehicles damaged in France are to be shipped back to England for repair, reconditioning, or salvage through the trade channels. Even where cars, pumps, or garage premises have been impressed outright by various authorities, the hiring rates now announced are insufficient to cover even depreciation. And why is the potential manufacturing capacity of thousands of these motor trade concerns, well equipped, well stocked, well staffed, ignored by any co-ordinating authority?"

The answer was that the trade was obliged "to try to deal simultaneously and collectively with a multiplicity of different authorities. For instance, the Ministry of Home Security, the Home Office, Ministry of Transport, Admiralty, War Office, Air Ministry, local and municipal government boards, Department of Mines, Board of Trade, Ministry of Supply." What was needed was "a Cabinet policy impressed from above upon all the De-

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, January 20, 1940

partments concerned"; and this apparently it was impossible to have without changing the organization of the Government.

Producer  
Gas  
Vehicles

The report of the committee on the Emergency Conversion of Motor Vehicles to Producer Gas was issued early in February. It stated that, provided suitable equipment and fuels were used, producer gas could be regarded as a practicable alternative fuel for motor vehicles, and could be recommended for certain types of road transport. The producer plant designed by the Committee is regarded as satisfactory in operation with low volatile anthracite and certain low temperature cokes. The plant was designed for vehicles having a gross laden weight of six tons with engine capacities of 3-4 litres. About twenty-five firms had been granted licences to manufacture equipment conforming with the Committee's design.

Electric  
Motor  
Cars

The possibilities of replacing petrol-driven road vehicles by electric cars in order to save petrol were also being explored. An electric van of half a ton capacity would run about two miles to one unit of electricity, costing from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in most parts of the country. It was cheaper than a horse, and petrol would have to be reduced to 5d. a gallon to compare with it. There were about 100,000 commercial vehicles in this country travelling from thirty to forty miles a day. If they were replaced by electric vehicles, about 70,000,000 gallons of petrol a year would be saved.<sup>1</sup>

Air  
Trans-  
port

Imperial and British Airways, which together operated our oversea services, were at the end of February flying about 120,000 miles a week, as compared with the pre-September (1939) figure of 180,000. The Empire routes continued to be operated, and there were regular services to France and to Scandinavia. Lack of craft prevented

<sup>1</sup> Sir Felix Pole's figures.

the companies from meeting the greatly increased demand for aeroplane seats which the perils of sea-transport occasioned

At the outbreak of war there were seventeen companies operating within the United Kingdom. It was arranged that the civil aviation department of the Air Ministry should pay the expenses of all these companies and allow them a certain margin of profit. In February, however, it was decided that this arrangement was costing the country too much, and that only seven of the companies should continue to receive support. The other ten were to be suppressed, and their craft taken over by the Ministry. Of the seven approved companies six were partially under the control of the railways, a circumstance which gave rise to a suspicion that the Government wished the railways to have a monopoly of internal air services<sup>1</sup>. In reply to protests from the independent air lines, Sir Kingsley Wood denied that favour was being shown to the railways. It was only possible to justify the retention of internal air lines in war where some national interest was involved, and this principle was being interpreted broadly as applying to routes crossing water with no alternative means of land transport, such as the lines connecting England with Belfast, certain places in Scotland, and the Channel Islands. Sir Kingsley further pointed out that the companies which were operating those routes were also having more than half their aircraft requisitioned, and were only being permitted to retain the bare minimum necessary for running the selected routes.

<sup>1</sup> "Even if it is not the intention of the Air Ministry to create such a situation, their policy is leading to this unfortunate result. The railways are no more interested in air transport than in road transport. What they are interested in is railways. They want to keep all the traffic on the rails, and to secure control of other forms of surface transport if some traffic will persist in leaving the rails"—F. C. R. Jaques, Managing Director of North Eastern Airways, Ltd., *The Times*, March 16, 1940.



At the end of January the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Section of the London Chamber of Commerce expressed concern for the future of British air transport, and called attention to "disquieting reports that no new aircraft are being supplied, that crews are being taken by the military authorities, that administrative personnel is rapidly becoming depleted, that aircraft in process of building are not to be finished, and that the materials necessary for the construction and repair of commercial aircraft are not on the priority list. If this represents the true state of affairs, it means not only that one of the most powerful weapons for economic warfare is being rapidly destroyed, but that the whole future of British air transport in time of peace is being jeopardized."<sup>1</sup>

Great disappointment was expressed in business circles at the indefinite suspension of the plans for a British service across the South Atlantic. The French continued their South Atlantic service despite the war, and the Italians were operating a regular service between Rome and Rio de Janeiro. The United States and Holland were at the same time rapidly expanding their commercial fleets, while Germany was maintaining all her pre-war commercial air services, except those to Allied countries. Pan-American Clippers continued to fly from New York to Lisbon by way of Bermuda.<sup>2</sup> They took only twenty-eight hours to cross the Atlantic, but letters from New York arrived in London about a fortnight after posting. Instead of being flown direct from Lisbon to London they were sent overland from Lisbon to Paris—a forty-eight-hour journey—and there held up for perhaps four

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, January 30, 1940

<sup>2</sup> They could not fly to Foynes, since Eire was in the war zone from which all American craft were excluded by the United States Government

<sup>3</sup> After March 15, 1940, the eastbound transatlantic Clippers ceased to call at Bermuda, stopping instead at Horta, in the Azores

days for examination by the French censor. Air mail packets from England to New York sometimes took longer to arrive than if they had been sent by sailing ship. Two manuscripts despatched by air mail on December 17, 1939, arrived on February 6, 1940—nearly two months later <sup>1</sup>

## 9 MAN-POWER

The number of men registered in December, 1939, under the second proclamation of the National Service Act, was 240,000. The third Proclamation was signed by the King on January 1. While each of its predecessors had affected only one additional age group, this proclamation covered a five-year range—23 to 27. The first registration under the new proclamation, that of men between 20 and 23, took place on February 17. Approximately 258,000 registered, and of this number about 5,000, or under 2 per cent, claimed exemption on conscientious grounds. During the first six months nearly 200,000 men enlisted voluntarily in the Army. A large proportion of these were older men, and they served as a much-needed stiffening of the young conscripted groups. The average age of the infantry was 25, and of other arms over 26.

The total number of unemployed on December 11 was 1,361,525, made up of 1,170,798 wholly unemployed, 143,065 temporarily stopped, and 47,662 normally in casual employment. This was 41,063 less than the number on the registers on November 13, 1939, and 469,847 less than on December 12, 1938. The total on December 11, 1939, comprised 897,984 men, 35,418 boys, 377,168 women, and 50,955 girls.

<sup>1</sup> The MSS were despatched by Messrs Elkin Mathews, Ltd.

These figures came as something of a shock to the many who had hoped that the high unemployment level of the first weeks of war would quickly subside. The number unemployed on January 15 was 1,518,896, or about 157,000 more than a month earlier, but the greater part of the increase was due to hard weather. Another contributory factor was the cessation of special Christmas employment. At the same time, there was little evidence of growing absorption of the unemployed in war industries. Hard weather was still affecting employment when the mid-February count was taken. It showed a total of 1,504,100 unemployed, or about 15,000 fewer than in January. By the end of February improved weather conditions had reduced the number by a further 200,000, leaving approximately 1,300,000 out of work. The Government professed to see in these figures evidences that they had the man-power problem well in hand, but their complacency was not shared by impartial observers. Making full allowances for all the special causes of unemployment, "the fact remains that, in the first five months of the war, an average of 1,410,000 workers were unemployed, and that even if 500,000 of these were unemployable, the loss of production due to the unemployment of the remainder was equivalent in those five months to at least £100,000,000. *That is to say, the national waste created by this unemployment has been of the same scale of magnitude as the total production of the aircraft industry.*<sup>1</sup>

"The simple fact is that unemployment at the present rate is a real cost to the nation of something like £5,000,000 a week ; that represents, on the most conservative possible estimate, the extent to which our national production is falling short of what is possible. In reality, the short-fall is a good deal greater than that, for the number of

<sup>1</sup> Author's italics.

women who could be brought into the productive machine is certainly measured in millions, and there are further possibilities in the increase of hours"<sup>1</sup>

Early in the year, Mr Churchill made a call for 1,000,000 additional women to work in munitions factories. Since there were then 1,300,000 insured unemployed the First Lord was, for once, not taken very seriously. Emi  
men  
of W

In February there were approximately 6,350,000 women workers, as against 15,000,000 men. According to the calculations of the Institute of Statistics, 4,000,000 additional women will ultimately be required for industry and commerce. This is on the assumption that 2,800,000 men will be required for the Services, and that there will be a net increase in the total number of workers. The metal industries alone are calculated ultimately to demand the services of 1,500,000 women. To secure these numbers it would be necessary to mobilize every single and widowed woman between the ages of fourteen and fifty-five, as well as one in three of the married women in the same age group.<sup>2</sup>

After six months the Government had made no serious attempt to deal with the grievances of the nursing profession. To the request of the combined nursing associations that trained nurses, thrown out of work by the substitution of auxiliaries, should be employed instead of auxiliaries or as instructors to auxiliaries at First Aid Posts, the Ministry of Health replied that they could not advise additional appointments. These trained nurses were either without work or pay, or they had been forced into other employments. Meanwhile, sick people who urgently needed attention had not been able to get into hospital, others had been discharged long before they

<sup>1</sup> *Time and Tide*, February 10, 1940

<sup>2</sup> *Time and Tide*, February 3, 1940.

were fit to go home, and auxiliary nurses, with only a few hours' training were allowed to undertake the most responsible hospital duties <sup>1</sup>

the Derby  
scheme

The problem of the boy who left school at eighteen, two years before his calling-up, was engaging the attention of head masters, parents, and employers. Some would undergo professional or technical training, but there would be many who would, in the absence of any comprehensive scheme for their useful employment, "waste" these formative years. Lord Derby proposed<sup>2</sup> that small contingents of these youths should be enlisted to work on the land or in industry, either at home or in the Dominions and Colonies. They would need only uniform, shelter, food, and a little pay. The scheme might be extended to include youths who leave school at fourteen or sixteen, and find difficulty in obtaining employment. This idea for pre-military training was not new, it originated in the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and bore rich fruit under the Nazis. It had also been successfully tried out in South Africa and the United States. Lord Derby's proposal excited considerable interest, but it was viewed with suspicion by some sections of organized labour, and at the end of our period the Government had taken no steps to adopt it.

training  
centres

The Ministry of Labour's technical training centres for youths over eighteen had about 8,000 places, of which only 6,000 were occupied in January, 1940. It was the Ministry's policy to provide a further 7,000 places, and to extend the scheme to cover men over forty-five. The training took six months, and the trainee had to declare his intention of seeking insured employment. The centres were concentrating on producing semi-skilled men who could take their places immediately in essential

<sup>1</sup> *Time and Tide*, February 17, 1940

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, December 28, 1939

industries The trainees were given allowances amounting to 22s a week

During the Four Years' War women had been called <sup>Women War-ti</sup> upon to do work which had formerly been considered outside their sphere They worked in trains and buses, on farms, and in gardens, in munitions factories and Government departments, in banks and offices Early in 1940 some two million women had been mobilized in Great Britain, either as auxiliaries in men's units or in organizations of their own set up specially to assist the national effort In addition, the existing women's organizations, such as the Women's Institutes, the Girl Guides, the Townswomen's Guilds, the Y W C A, the G F S, and other bodies were helping in various ways

The women of Great Britain responded magnificently to the call for A R P workers They served in the Auxiliary Fire Service, as ambulance drivers, and as wardens, they manned communications and report centres Some even acted as special constables The total number of women engaged in whole- or part-time A R P work was 412,000 In addition, there were over 100,000 women A R P workers in reserve The Auxiliary Fire Services claimed 5,000 women whole-time, and about 9,000 part-time

The Women's Voluntary Service was set up as a central agency for enrolling and training women for all the services in which they acted as auxiliaries By the end of February this body had trained over half a million volunteers Probably its greatest achievement was in connection with the evacuation Its members served as agents of the local education authorities to receive the evacuees, and look after the interests of the children and mothers in their new homes Some 1,000,000 W V S helpers were said to have been engaged in this work

The Civil Nursing Reserve, recruited primarily for dealing with civilian casualties, consisted of more than 20,000 trained nurses and assistant nurses, and over 100,000 nursing auxiliaries. The British Red Cross and the Order of St John of Jerusalem passed some thousands of V A D s through to the Services for work in military, naval, and air force hospitals, and large numbers of women were recruited for the Central Hospital Supply Service. About 15,000 were enrolled in the Women's Land Army, and about 3,200 were placed in employment during the first six months. The total number of women agricultural workers was 47,000. During the Great War, women had proved themselves to be capable of doing almost every kind of farm work. A return made in August, 1918, of 12,657 women showed that 5,734 were milkers, 293 tractor drivers, 3,971 field workers, 635 carters, 260 ploughmen, 84 thatchers, and 21 shepherds.

Over 25,000 members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service had received training and were serving with the troops as cooks, clerks, lorry drivers, and storekeepers. They were provided with uniforms and paid about two-thirds of the wage paid to soldiers of corresponding rank. Close upon 4,000 members of the Women's Royal Naval Service were enrolled to serve in Naval Shore Departments as clerks, telephone and wireless operators, telephonists, and stewards. At the outbreak of war the Women's Auxiliary Air Force had a strength of 11,000, with 2,000 officers and N C O s.

During the last war it had been said that women had proved their ability to do everything as well as men—save to command other women, and pitiable were the stories of bullying to which juniors in all branches of service, particularly the V A D, had been subjected. No such tendencies were observed in this fifth German war.

## 10 COST OF LIVING, WAGES, ALLOWANCES

On January 1, the cost of living index was nineteen points above the level of September 1, 1939. These nineteen points represented a rise of 12 per cent. Clothing had gone up 20 per cent, food 14 per cent, fuel and light 7 per cent, other items 6 per cent. The index figure for food was the same as on December 1, 1939, but a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent increase in food prices occurred during January, while the general cost-of-living figure rose a further three points to the record level of 177 on February 1, compared with 155 when the war began. The index figure had thus risen by twenty-two points since September. A rise in the price of meat was the principal factor responsible for the increase in the cost of food. There were also increases in the prices of fish, potatoes, cheese, and eggs. Among items other than food, the principal changes were increases in the prices of clothing.

The absence of further rises in the price of food between December 1 and January 1 was due to an Exchequer subsidy of about £1,000,000 a week. This was still being paid at the end of February. In February Professor Bewley pointed out<sup>1</sup> that the cost of living index was very far from being an accurate guide to the relative cost of living. The basis of the weights—the proportion given to each item of food—is a collection of family budgets in 1903–04, slightly modified in 1914. The average family then numbered between five and six, substantially above that of 1940. Moreover, working-class consumption had increased considerably in the intervening years.

The question of how far consumption was outrunning production, and of the extent to which we were eating into our stocks, was discussed in the House of Lords at

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum of the London and Cambridge Economic Service



the end of February. Such general data as were available were rather more reassuring than might be anticipated. The indices published by the Bank of England of the volume of retail sales suggested that a considerable measure of economy had been exercised by the civilian public in their personal expenditure in the preceding six months. In the early weeks of the war there appeared to have been an increase in the amount of buying from shops, but since then there had been a marked reduction.

Taking articles other than food, the Bank of England indices showed a reduction of 4 per cent in the money value of the goods purchased in November, 1939, compared with November of the preceding year, and a reduction of over 5 per cent for December compared with the preceding December. When allowance was made for the rise of prices the effective reduction in the volume of sales of non-food articles was not 4 per cent, but nearly 14 per cent for November, and not 5 per cent, but nearly 15 per cent for December. The volume of food purchases also seemed to have declined slightly by comparison with the preceding year.

The Bank of England returns were based on returns from certain shops only, which included principally department stores, co-operative societies, and multiple organizations, and were not necessarily representative of retail trade as a whole. Moreover, large numbers of men were now serving with the armed Forces, and their wants were no longer supplied through shops. But when due allowance had been made for those considerations, it remained probable that there had been an appreciable reduction in the general volume of purchases made by the civilian public.

The Bank of England retail figures also covered the stocks held by the retailers who made returns, and those

figures, as far as they went, were encouraging. According to them, the stocks held by shops in December were somewhat larger, that was after allowance had been made for the rise in prices, than in December of the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Stamp, speaking in the House of Lords, pointed out that, during the first four months, the prices of primary products had risen not only in this country but all over the world, the American index showed an increase of  $19\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, as against one of  $28\frac{1}{2}$  per cent in Great Britain. For industrial materials, as distinct from foodstuffs, the increases were much greater—31 and  $35\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. These figures showed that there was no immediate danger of an inflationary rise of prices in Great Britain, the difference between the increases here and in the United States being explained by the depreciation of sterling. Profiteering was exceptional, even if it was glaring in particular instances. We ought, according to Lord Stamp, to be willing to allow price increases to cover changes in inescapable basic costs.

A useful weapon against profiteering was the Prices of Goods Act, which made it a criminal offence to sell price-regulated goods at more than their price on August 21 last, plus an increase representing the actual rise in costs and expenses. The first Order made under the Act came into operation on January 1. Among the articles covered by it were clothing, household utensils, cutlery, household textiles, domestic glassware and pottery, torches, batteries, and sandbags. Both the Act and the first Order had the serious defect of being vague in their provisions. Traders were given no guidance on what price increases were permissible. Traders expressed dissatisfaction because the operation of the Act depended

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hankey, House of Lords, February 28, 1940

on complaints by purchasers, and not upon the reports of official inspectors.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of January, when the cost of living had risen by 12 per cent, wages had risen by 5 per cent.<sup>2</sup> No attempt was made by the Ministry of Labour to ensure uniformity in the terms of agreements concerning the relation between wages and the cost of living. Thus, while labourers in the building trade were receiving an increase of 4d. per week for every rise of one point in the cost of living, workers in civil engineering construction were receiving 3d.; those in the electrical contracting industry 5d., and many railwaymen 2½d. It seemed to many that it was part of the Government's business to lay down regulations as to when wage increases were justifiable, and on what scale they should be given. Their failure to do so was taken as a symptom of their failure to cope with the problem of economic co-ordination as a whole.

Family  
Allowances

The rising cost of living brought up in an acute form the problem of how to prevent a fall in the already deplorably low standard of living of the poorer children. A system of family allowances was advocated by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, Mr. Keynes,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Amery, Mr. L. J. Cadbury, Mrs. Eva Hubback, and others. Mrs. Hubback pointed out<sup>4</sup> the "astounding discrepancies in the sums proposed for different categories of children of parents dealt with by various authorities—ranging as they do in a family of several children from the average of 3s. for the child of the unemployed man on standard benefit, or 3s. 7d. for the soldier's child, to the 6s. 9d. per

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, December 28, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> In the last war the average rate of wages measured in terms of money rose by 35 or 40 per cent, but fell simultaneously by 22 or 25 per cent when measured in terms of goods.

<sup>3</sup> See page 193 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Spectator*, December 15, 1939.

week allowed for the income tax children's rebate, and the 8s 6d allowed for the evacuee child—have proved that the sums proposed have been determined with little relevance to any scientifically determined minimum of child maintenance, and in every scale except the last two, are definitely below any such estimate”

The urgent necessity of making special provision for the children is evident when we realize that “in every social survey made since the War, it has been found that the proportion of children living below the poverty line is considerably greater than the proportion of adults. The Merseyside Survey showed that out of 6,780 families selected by random sample from the working-class population of four great boroughs, only 16 per cent of the families, but nearly 25 *per cent of the children*, were living in primary poverty. In the Bristol Survey (1937) again it was shown that “one working-class child in every five comes from a home where income is inadequate to provide a bare minimum standard”. A further inquiry in 1937, in West Sussex, showed that 72 per cent of children in the rural districts surveyed lived in homes where the food expenditure was below the minimum recognized by the British Medical Association as necessary for the maintenance of health”

Mr Cadbury<sup>2</sup> expressed the view that “if the principle of relieving hardship only where actual hardship exists is not speedily adopted, we shall be involved in that general rise in wages, preceded and followed by rising prices, which we all condemn as the ‘vicious spiral’”. He thought that the allowances might at first be limited to the second and subsequent children in each family. If the rate were to be 5s per child, the annual cost to the State would be £50,000,000—a large sum, but no larger than the cost of an all-round increase in wages of 1s

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, December 15, 1939

<sup>2</sup> *Spectator*, February 16, 1940

a week "If all 'working-class' children (in the Registrar-General's sense of the term) were brought into the scheme, an allowance of 5s a week per child would cost round about £112,000,000 in a year. If the scope of the scheme were limited to the children of workers insured against unemployment and the allowance were reduced to 3s, the annual cost would be round about £80,000,000. Against this debt must be thrown into the balance sums now paid in children's allowances to the unemployed, the many expensive after-effects of malnutrition, the discontent and unhappiness caused by penury, together with the ramified incalculable results of a host of indiscriminate alternative devices for relieving the pressure of rising costs on family needs"<sup>1</sup>

A considerable number of firms gave family allowances to their staffs on their own initiative. Among them was that of which Mr Cadbury was a member. Rowntree & Co., the cocoa and chocolate manufacturers, instituted a scheme which applied to employes whose pay was under £400 a year, and who had more than three dependent children. The allowance was 5s a week for every dependent child in excess of three, provided that all such children were maintained as members of the family. The allowance formed no part of employes' wages or salaries, and it was paid on a weekly basis irrespective of overtime, short time, or sickness.

A national system of family allowances would put an end to what the Tyneside Council of Social Service described as the "serious war-time evil" of "grossly inadequate allowances" to the dependents of men in the Forces. The annual report of this Council showed that many of the women and children whose men had gone were short of food, clothes, and everyday necessities. "Recourse may certainly be had to the U A B, or the

<sup>1</sup> Mary Stocks, *Manchester Guardian*, February 7, 1940

P A C , whose officials are extremely sympathetic, but in effect this means that the dependents of men serving with the Forces, whatever the men's earnings have been, are reduced in their standard of living to the subsistence level of the unemployed, with all the evils of that level, since only when serving men's families have sunk to that level can they satisfy the statutory 'need-test' and qualify for relief. This is surely an unconscionable thing for a nation in which very many are wealthy and many making new wealth<sup>1</sup> equipping these very men for war."

## II THE KEYNES SCHEME

In February, Mr J M Keynes published an amended version of his compulsory savings plan<sup>2</sup> under the name of "deferred pay," in a pamphlet, *How to Pay for the War*.<sup>3</sup> In Mr Keynes's view, the failure to take drastic steps to reach an "equilibrium between the spending power in people's pockets and what can be released for their consumption," would not, as many thought, lead to immediate inflation, because manufacturers and retailers were reluctant to raise their prices above the level dictated by increased costs. Consequently, there was more likely to be a shortage of supplies than an inflated price level. This would be an unfair and inefficient method of restricting consumption, and it would exert an unfavourable pressure on our balance of trade. The better alternative was to restrict spending power, and to allow as much consumer's choice as possible in the use of it. The basic fact was that the public as a whole could not increase its consumption by increasing its money earnings. "each individual can increase his share of consumption if he

<sup>1</sup> The author is unable to refute—or confirm—this *obiter* addition to an argument strong without it.

<sup>2</sup> *First Quarter*, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> Macmillan & Co., 1919.

has more money to spend. But, since the size of the cake is now fixed and no longer expansible, he can only do so at the expense of other people." Mr. Keynes claimed for his plan that it would enable the wage- and salary-earner to consume as much as ever before, and at the same time to put money away for future use that would otherwise get into the hands of the capitalist class. Without such a plan as his, increased earnings will simply lead to increased prices. "If all earnings are raised two shillings in the £, and are spent on buying the same quality of goods as before, this means that prices also will rise two shillings in the £, and no one will be a pint of beer or a loaf of bread better off than he was before." The increased effort put forward by the people in war-time should undoubtedly earn an increased reward, but the enjoyment of this reward must be postponed until after the war.

With the coming of war we had moved back from the Age of Plenty to the Age of Scarcity. People were slow in realizing this, mainly because, after six months of war, there was still a substantial volume of unemployment—the mark of the Age of Plenty. "This is due to a failure of organization, partly avoidable if there was more energy and intelligence in the Government." But the nature of this unemployment was totally different from what it had been a year ago. It was caused not by a deficiency in demand, but mainly by shortages of essential raw materials. Nevertheless, the earnings of the country as a whole should increase by about £825,000,000 on account of increased employment and output. We must withdraw from consumption this sum of £825,000,000 plus £175,000,000 of incomes previously spent, in all £1,000,000,000 of private incomes.

To the question "Can the rich pay for the war?" Mr. Keynes gives an emphatic "No." "If everyone with more

than £500 a year had the whole of his income in excess of that sum taken away from him in taxes, the yield would not be nearly enough, being £620 million, or only two-thirds of the Government's requirements " It follows that those with incomes below £500 a year must be called upon to make sacrifices Mr Keynes maintained that the income group from £250 to £500 a year was escaping its proper share of taxes, it actually paid a smaller proportion of its pre-war incomes than the group below £250, namely, 7·8 per cent compared with 13·4 per cent Even so, the cost of the war could not be met merely by increasing the demands of those with incomes over £250 a year, to attempt to do so would mean taking from them in savings and taxation about three-quarters of their total war-time incomes

An extra burden must therefore be placed on those with less than £250 a year This group accounts for 'about 88 per cent of the population, for more than 60 per cent of the total personal incomes of the country and for about two-thirds of current consumption " But while finding it necessary to make demands on this class, Mr Keynes was anxious that they should be enabled to maintain an adequate minimum standard of living, and it was to ensure this that he favoured proposals for *family allowances* and a *minimum, or iron, ration* A family allowance of 5s per week should be paid in cash for each child up to the age of fifteen, and a minimum ration of consumption goods should be made available at a low fixed price "It should be agreed that in the event of any rise in the cost of the minimum ration, the Trade Unions should be free to press for a corresponding increase in wages " Mr Keynes felt that the effect of these two measures would be actually to improve the economic position of the poorer families "how great a benefit in comparison with a futile attempt to evade a



reasonable share of the burden of a just war, ending in a progressive inflation 1''

Unmarried men with 35s a week and under, and married men with 45s a week and under, would be exempt from deferment of pay. The amounts demanded from those with incomes above these levels, but not above £5 a week, are shown hereunder:

	Weekly Earnings	Deferment of Pay	Existing Income Tax	Total Demands
Unmarried	45/-	3/6	nil	3/6
	55/-	5/9	1/3	7/-
	75/-	9/9	4/3	14/-
	80/-	10/9	5/-	15/9
	100/-	14/3	8/6	22/9
Married	45/-	nil	nil	nil
	55/-	3/6	nil	3/6
	75/-	10/6	nil	10/6
	80/-	12/3	nil	12/3
	100/-	15/10½	3/4½	19/3
	Weekly Earnings	Total Demands	Family Allowance	Cash remaining for consumpt'n
Married with 2 young children	45/-	nil	10/-	55/-
	55/-	3/6	10/-	61/6
	75/-	10/6	10/-	74/6
	80/-	12/3	10/-	77/9
	100/-	19/3	10/-	90/9
Married with 3 young children	45/-	nil	15/-	60/-
	55/-	3/6	15/-	66/6
	75/-	10/6	15/-	79/6
	80/-	12/3	15/-	82/9
	100/-	19/3	15/-	95/9

The results for a married man with an earned income above £5 a week are as follows

Total Income	Income Tax and Surtax	Income Deferred	Remaining Income
£	£	£	£
300	15	49	236
400	31	68	301
600	93	76	431
1,000	218	135	647
2,000	562	285	1,153
5,000	2,055	630	2,315
10,000	5,268	1,156	3,576
20,000	13,018	1,896	5,088
100,000	80,768	4,133	15,099

The deferred pay could be deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank, with a Trade Union, or a Friendly Society, and a considerable degree of discretion could be allowed to such bodies as to the conditions under which payments could be released to the individual to meet personal emergencies. In general, however, they would not be withdrawn until after the war. "The appropriate time for the ultimate release of the deposits will have arrived at the onset of the first post-war slump. For then the present position will be exactly reversed. Instead of demand being in excess of supply, we shall have a capacity to produce in excess of the current demand. Thus the system of deferment will be twice blessed, and will do almost as much good hereafter in preventing deflation and unemployment as it does now in preventing inflation and the exhaustion of scarce resources."

Mr Keynes thinks there may be a good case for linking a Capital Levy to the Deferred Pay. He suggests, therefore, that a levy bringing in sufficient to discharge the liability in respect of Deferred Pay should be enforced

after the war. He dismisses the proposal for the immediate enforcement of the Capital Levy on the ground that it would do little or nothing to solve the present problem. The post-war capital levy might in part be used to pay a "veteran's bonus" to men who had been on active service.

There is little space in which to discuss the multitudinous objections that were raised to the scheme outlined above. As with the first Keynes Plan, criticisms came equally from Right and Left, but on the whole they were surprisingly few and did little to upset the faith of the considerable body of opinion that was friendly towards the scheme. A statement of the attitude of the extreme Communist Left is to be found in Emile Burns's *Mr Keynes Answered*<sup>1</sup>, a pamphlet of approximately the same size as *How to Pay for the War*. It is chiefly interesting as showing that if one desires effectively to attack Mr Keynes it is necessary to load one's pen with something more than spleen. Mr Burns quotes Marx's reference to "the decay of bourgeois political economy as a science after the capitalists had conquered power". He might do worse than produce a pamphlet on the decay of "Marxian" political economy after the Stalinists had conquered power not only in the country from which he derives his political ideas but in the British Communist Party.

The Labour Party and moderate Socialists generally were not unfavourably disposed towards Mr Keynes's proposals. Mr G. D. H. Cole was particularly impressed by the children's allowance proposal, which he thought would "help millions of the poorest people whom the trade unions have never yet been able to reach or effectively help<sup>2</sup>." Mr H. N. Brailsford described the plan

<sup>1</sup> Published by Lawrence & Wishart at 1s

<sup>2</sup> *Tribune*, March 29, 1940

as one which "promises not merely to pay for the war, but to carry us in the process past several milestones on the road to social equality<sup>1</sup>" The *New Statesman* went so far as to say that, "There is no doubt at all that the Keynes plan involves a redistribution in favour of the working classes much larger than anything proposed by either of the Labour Governments of the past and also, we believe, much larger than anything involved in the earlier stages of the Labour Party's existing programme Nor is there any doubt that it possesses the immense advantage of securing a large instalment of social justice by methods which will at the same time do more than anything else to secure the effective prosecution of the war in its economic aspects So cogent a combination of arguments is not lightly to be disregarded<sup>2</sup>"

Determined hostility to the Keynes Plan was displayed by the more enthusiastic supporters of the Savings campaign Sir Robert Kindersley, president of the National Savings Committee, said that one big difference between the Savings Movement and Mr Keynes was that they trusted the people and he did not The people of this country were capable of making almost any sacrifice when they believed, as they did, in the cause they were fighting for, and if they were given a reasonably fair deal "If you keep to voluntary savings you will be astounded at the results achieved as the country gets completely organized and as the necessity for saving becomes, as it will, as clear as daylight and not vitiated by figures of unemployment and disputes over means tests But try to impose upon the people something in the nature of compulsory savings, a method that must be crammed full of injustices, and you sour them instead of developing a spirit of devoted sacrifice Mr Keynes, when he first

<sup>1</sup> *Reynolds News*, March 10, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> March 2, 1940.

put his proposals forward, exposed them in all their misshapen nakedness—and he found that they made no appeal. He therefore proceeded to dress his scheme up in a prettily beflowered frock, hoping thus to disguise the misshapen limbs below. But, if you are bold enough to lift the skirt you will find the same ugly form, just as it was before. I would like to know what Mr. Keynes thinks will happen to the existing savings of £1,500,000,000 in the Post Office Savings Bank, the trustee savings banks, and savings certificates, when a start is made with compulsory deductions under his scheme. I believe that a disgruntled public would be likely to make heavy withdrawals of these savings with the result that you will lose in one way a large proportion of what you gain in another. Again, what is going to happen when people start to let loose the flood of their compulsory savings after the war?

When they receive this money in lumps it is likely to be spent wildly and produce an unhealthy inflation.”<sup>1</sup>

There were some who shared the view of Mr. C. A. Rowley<sup>2</sup> that in Mr. Keynes’s plan “half the job—the means of securing the savings has been well outlined, and the other half—the means of repayment—left extremely vague.” In his reply to Mr. Rowley,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Keynes said

“I am myself convinced that either a capital levy or a capital tax would be technically possible on the scale required—which is much smaller than what most people are expecting, being no more than 5 per cent of accumulated wealth if we take Mr. Rowley’s estimate of the amount of the levy. But I would remind him that I

<sup>1</sup> At the end of February there were over 55,000 savings’ groups or clubs in the country, and of these 13,000 had been formed since November. Many of the clubs ran into tens of thousands of members, and there were between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000 savers in the country. Mainly owing to these clubs the total of savings certificates and defence bonds amounted to £91,662,000.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, April 5, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, April 10, 1940.

expressed a preference for a capital tax by instalments which technically is the easier alternative. Moreover, I emphasized my own view that it is the redundant savings which will be available in the post-war slump, rather than the capital levy, which will ensure the possibility of releasing the deferred pay. While a capital levy may operate as a popular assurance of repayment, my own reasons for regarding it as a policy complementary to deferred pay are different. A method of financing the war, which avoids both inflation and crushing taxes, necessarily leaves us with an unwieldy burden of war debt, especially if the method of deferred pay enables us to do justice to men serving with the Forces. A capital levy of some 5 per cent of accumulated wealth is the easiest and justest way of avoiding this consequence, while there is also a special suitability in rewarding the risks, the labours and the abstinences of war-time at the expense of the old wealth which they will have served to safeguard."

## 12 MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

During the first three months of the war the Ministry of Information had been uncomfortably prominent, the second quarter afforded it a period of comparative quiet. That is not to say that all misrepresentation of its activities ceased, in particular, a number of persons and papers displayed a careless oblivion of the statement which the Prime Minister had made on October 3, transferring from the Ministry all responsibility for censorship, for the issue of news, and for propaganda in enemy countries (The first two functions went to the Press and Censorship Bureau, under the control of the Home Secretary, and the third to the Foreign Office). Nor was the voice of criticism completely stilled. But the misrepresentation did not seriously impede the work of the Ministry, and the volume of the criticism was no longer

such as to compel a number of senior officers to devote a large part of their time to the preparation of answers, at the expense of their regular work. The Ministry was, in short, given time and peace in which to dispose of the numerous problems which had all presented themselves simultaneously on the outbreak of war, to recover its confidence (considerably shaken by the earlier outcry), to familiarize its personnel with their work, and to reflect upon the objectives at which it ought to aim as well as the means by which it could best achieve them. These processes were all gathering momentum when, on January 6, it was announced that Sir John Reith had succeeded Lord Macmillan. The arrival of a fresh mind, already qualified by experience in similar work, gave them additional impetus.

The nature of the processes made them unlikely to yield quick results, and there was not, in fact, much to be seen from outside during the period under review. The general effect was, however, a reversal of the "deflationary" policy pursued since the end of September. Activities which had been suspended as superfluous were found, when absent, to have fulfilled an integral part in the work of the Ministry and had, in due course, to be restored, though in many cases with a different staff. The culmination of this process was not to be seen until after the first half-year, when the Press and Censorship Bureau was reabsorbed into the Ministry.

Shortly after Sir John Reith's appointment the Ministry was divided into a directorate, consisting of the divisions responsible for propaganda in neutral and Allied countries and in the Empire, the American Division, and the functional Divisions responsible for the production of material in particular media, and a secretariat, the distinction between the two sides being that the directorate became responsible for the framing of policy and the

secretariat for the routine of administration. At the same time, the Home Publicity Division was broken up, administration of the regional machinery was entrusted to a new division set up for the purpose, while responsibility for the policy pursued at home was given to the functional divisions. With these exceptions, the organization of the Ministry underwent little alteration, although a number of changes of personnel were made, of which the most notable was the appointment of Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery, as Director of the Films Division in place of Sir Joseph Ball.

The principal broadcasting innovation of the second <sup>British</sup> <sup>Broadcast</sup> <sup>ing</sup> three months was the daily special programme for the Forces. From September 1 the Home Service had been confined to a single programme, but on January 7 an additional Forces programme was broadcast experimentally in the evenings. On February 18 this was extended to a twelve-hour programme, starting at 11 a.m. The Director-General, Mr F. W. Ogilvie, had discovered from personal contacts at the Front that, "whatever tastes may be in private life, conditions in the field make for listening in groups, from a handful to a hundred or more, and listening in groups makes some types of programme suitable, while other types, equally good otherwise, are simply not listened to - under conditions in the field." To meet these special requirements, the Forces programme was composed predominantly of light entertainment throughout the week. As an alternative, the Home Service programme could also be heard satisfactorily on the wavelength of 449 metres over most of the areas in which the B. E. F. was stationed. Some of the news bulletins and special features in the Home Service were occasionally broadcast simultaneously in the Forces programme.

During this period the B. B. C. developed further its



own particular method of reporting the war. Its observers in France formed a recording unit which, towards the end of January, inaugurated a regular Saturday evening feature—"Despatch from the Front". This gave a recorded story of what had been happening on the Western Front during the previous week. At the same time the activities of the Navy and the R A F were regularly covered. The Russo-Finnish war was reported by an ex-B B C announcer who, during his two months in Finland, gave twenty-five separate talks and travelled over 5,000 miles. Major events of the war occupied much programme space. Successive news bulletins, talks, and commentaries, told the story of the Battle of the River Plate. Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harwood's account of the battle was broadcast from Montevideo. The return of the *Exeter* and *Ajax* and the welcome the crews received both at the port and in London was fully reported. A commentary was given on the march through London to the Mansion House, the speeches at the luncheon there were also broadcast. Talks were given by a midshipman of the *Exeter* and a seaman from the *Ajax*.

The arrival of troops from the Empire was also presented. Records made of the Canadian troops on the way over were broadcast in "The World Goes By" on December 18. A description of the arrival of the Indian troops in France was given on January 6. The arrival of the second contingent of Canadian troops on January 1 was described on the spot, as was the King's visit to the Canadian troops on January 24, and the arrival of the third contingent on February 8. Eye-witness accounts of the arrival of the Australian and New Zealand troops at Suez and their welcome by Mr Anthony Eden were broadcast in the middle of February. The rescue of the British prisoners from the *Altmark* was fully described, and

talks by several of the rescued seamen describing life on board were given

On Christmas Day a message from H M the King to members of the British Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleet was read in the 8 a m news Recorded messages were also broadcast in the news from General Lord Gort, Commander-in-Chief of the British Field Forces, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall, Chief of the Air Staff, on Christmas Day, and from Admiral Sir Charles Morton-Forbes, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, on December 23 Messages were also broadcast from General Gamelin to the B E F, from the Pope, and from M Daladier to the French nation and fighting forces At 3 p m the King broadcast to the Empire following the "Round the Empire" programme, which included an exchange of Christmas scenes and greetings between the peoples of the Commonwealth, and messages from the Dover Patrol, the B E F, and the Fighter Command

Broadcasting played its part in the propaganda campaigns launched by the Government The anti-gossip campaign, for example, was introduced at the microphone by "Fougasse" on the same day as his posters were first seen Talks were given on road safety, and, with the introduction of rationing, the subject of food and war-time housekeeping engaged the attention of speakers The aims and methods of German propaganda as a whole were examined and revealed in a comprehensive series of talks, "The Voice of the Nazi," while more than one speaker endeavoured to put listeners on their guard against the broadcasts by Germany to this country

Government spokesmen frequently came to the microphone to deal with various aspects of the war effort Mr Winston Churchill, for instance, spoke on the state of the war on January 20 Speeches in provincial centres by Cabinet Ministers were broadcast on six successive

Saturday afternoons, beginning on January 20. The series was opened by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, and ended with the speech of the Prime Minister at Birmingham. The other speakers were Mr. Churchill, Mr. Oliver Stanley, Sir Kingsley Wood, and Sir Samuel Hoare. Opposition leaders who broadcast during this period included Major Attlee and Mr. Herbert Morrison.

The addition of Bulgarian and Swedish to the foreign language broadcasts brought the total number of languages used daily to seventeen. The other fifteen were English, Afrikaans, Arabic, Czech, French, German, Greek, Italian, Magyar, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish, and Turkish. In addition there were weekly services in Slovak and Slovene.

By December the B.B.C. had reconstituted its "Listener Research" organization, and had embarked upon a nation-wide survey of listeners' preferences. Relying upon the sampling method, close estimates of the reactions of audiences to every programme were made on the basis of daily interviews with typical listeners in all walks of life.

#### The Arts

On the outbreak of war the cause of literature was confronted by two diametrically opposite tendencies. It was at once apparent that very much more general reading would be desired immediately from all sides; partly by the Army and by A.R.P. workers sitting long unoccupied hours, and partly because of the black-out, which meant that so many more people stayed at home in the evenings and would read instead of going to the cinema or theatre. Moreover, thousands of evacuees had come from areas where good public libraries were available, and had moved into country districts where the county service, naturally planned for much smaller needs, was inadequate to serve them. This necessitated large-scale redistribution of books by the libraries. On the other hand, publishers were not

unnaturally apprehensive that there would be steadily less money to spend, and that their public would concentrate upon the war and upon war interests.

These two opposite forces were at once noticeable in the enormous increase of the sixpenny Penguins, which, having languished because of the difficulty of finding new authors, now sprang into life, and sold in thousands upon thousands ; and in the necessary caution of publishers, who cancelled or postponed many books of great interest but doubtful appeal. This was the beginning of very serious war disadvantages for the newer and lesser known literature of younger writers. Against this, there was an undoubted general opinion that for many years far too many books had been published, and that therefore the lessening of publications was not altogether to be deplored.

However, after the first two months of the war, publishers recovered their courage and a good deal of their optimism. This was because it became evident that the first phase of the war was peculiar, in that the great and dramatic efforts and effects that had been expected were not occurring. People therefore were not only reading new books, quite apart from war interests, but were buying them, and by late autumn the book trade had greatly recovered its impetus. One change of importance was already to be discerned in the kind of literature now appearing. There had been for the past twenty years an increasing number of writers, particularly of younger writers, who had tended to turn literature into a political issue. Almost all the more intelligent young poets and novelists had been for a long time writing poems and novels that were considered valuable by the more intelligent critics largely because they were *romans à thèse*, concerned with Leftist politics : poetry, indeed, was headed by writers like W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender, young experimenters who were both so obscure that it was

difficult for themselves to explain what they meant, and so violently agitated by Marxian politics that literature *per se* was only a secondary consideration. The English novel also had been tending more and more towards the discontented defeatist autobiography, and could no longer hold the elements that had always belonged to the novel—narrative and character creation outside the author's experience—which were therefore neglected and even derided.

It was clear at once that the war was going to alter this. Some of the leading poets and novelists of the middle generation left immediately for America, and even for Hollywood. Several expressed their intention of becoming American citizens—no great stimulus or inspiration to their juniors, and the exact contrary of the far greater Henry James, who, in England's dark hour of 1915, enrolled himself as a British subject. Their conduct was defended in a bittersweet public apologia by the brilliant common sense of Mr. Harold Nicolson. They were, indeed, each and all of them, "honourable men!" Yet despite their various and abundant merits, "their presence in the United States may lead American opinion, which is all too prone to doubt the righteousness of our cause, to find comfort in their company. For if, indeed, four of our most acute and sensitive writers demonstrate by their exile that they wish to have no part in the bloodstained anarchy of Europe, then surely the ordinary American is ten times more justified in remaining aloof from so inhuman a business, and in proclaiming that isolationism is not only comfortable and convenient, but righteous and intelligent as well? How can we proclaim over there that we are fighting for the liberated mind, when four of our most liberated intellectuals refuse to identify themselves either with those who fight or with those who oppose the battle? . . . These four exiles

are striking figures, they are men of high intelligence, honour, and courage, and if they, at such a moment, deny Europe, then the Americans will feel, with a relief of uneasy conscience, that Europe is, in fact, something which a man of integrity, strength, and education has the right to deny”<sup>1</sup>

The general opinion of the British public was forcibly summarized in Mr A P Herbert’s “Lance the Leftist”<sup>2</sup>

Although, amongst writers in general, the outbreak of this war had none of the excited jingoism of the last, there was nevertheless so much universal attention paid by them to the new world that would follow, that their intellect once again began to be creative, rather than, as for the last twenty years, destructive. This could hardly be called a cheerful creativeness. In fact, there was behind it in the new writing of the autumn and winter a grim realism in which no frightfulness of life was ignored. But it was not a new defeatist literature that was beginning to appear. Against this intellectualism there began to be, naturally, great eagerness for romantic stories—even for the beautiful poems of writers like Ruth Pitter and Andrew Young—a return to something of the English countryside, very different from the Georgians of the last war, but written by dwellers in the same country.

By Christmas the possible shortage of paper began to be contemplated, adding to the paradox of an immense demand for reading, great cautiousness (rightly encouraged by the Government) in spending, and the certainty that in 1940 publishers’ lists would be reduced by at least half. This was the most serious blow to English letters since the opening of the war, for a new and interesting writer would now be placed in a most difficult position. First, because reviewing in all the papers was diminishing, and might soon disappear, secondly, because book shops, as

<sup>1</sup> *The Spectator*, April 19, 1940

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in full, Appendix I

new books were being bought so seldom, tended to take copies of unknown authors very rarely, and the libraries depended for their life largely on popular novels and books about the war.

The question then began to be asked : how was a book by a new writer to arrive at all ? How was it to be seen by anybody ? And the old evil system of offering the public only books that appealed to the largest number of people miserably lowered the standard of production.

The War Office had recognized prior to the war, when forming the Militia, that books would be an essential to the Militia camps. The National Book Council had, with the aid of a special committee, drawn up a list of suitable books. These were, of course, designed for the age group of the Militia, but, when war was declared, the list was extended for the use of the whole Army. Various local and national appeals were launched to obtain books for the fighting forces. Among these was the *Sunday Times* Book Fund. Finally, however, the majority were merged into the appeal issued under the names of the Lord Mayor of London and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, for the Lord Mayor's Service Libraries and Books Fund. The Red Cross Hospital Libraries which, since the last war, had carried on their work in civilian hospitals, immediately extended their activities to cover all military, naval, and air force hospitals, and an appeal was launched by them also.

The theatre had seemed at the outbreak of war in a perilous state. Black-out was in its early appearance terrifying, and, during the first days, practically all theatres and cinemas were closed. This could not, and did not last, entertainment being one of the most important factors in keeping up the general spirit. So hazardous, however, were theatre enterprises, that a general practice soon prevailed whereby even the most famous actors and

actresses accepted a small flat rate of salary with all their confrères, and depended for larger income on the actual audience during the current week. A result was that plays seemed to come and go with astonishing frequency. As in the last war light shows, musical comedies and revues held on the best. Special notice should be taken of the enterprise of the Mask Theatre at Westminster, which, at the very harshest winter period, played Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* for six months with immense success. The public soon took courage again, and the cinema broke into a more orchidaceous flowering than ever. The level of new films was anything but high, but they were crowded throughout the winter, and relieved the anxieties of many millions of people.

At the beginning of the New Year serious plays began once more to raise their anxious heads, but it was found that the most successful recipe was to coat the pill of real life with the sugar of melodrama. It cannot be said, however, that drama in England of an important kind has any very lively prospects so long as the war lasts.

The concentration of picture buyers on the younger English artists continued, to the general surprise, and even increased. Young artists, of whom there was a band more vigorous, perhaps, than any group of English painters in the last fifty years—John Piper, Graham Sutherland, Claude Rogers, Edward le Bas—found to their astonishment that at shows of their new pictures they were able to sell them all. Many persons during this winter of 1940 who had not considered English painting at all, now began to discuss it with acrimony and even attention.

At the end of the year the Pilgrim Trust announced that they had made a grant of £25,000 for the encouragement of music and the arts. Concerts were to be subsidized for the London Philharmonic and London



Symphony Orchestras, mainly in the newer industrial areas, and fifty other concerts on the lines of those which met with such success at the National Gallery. Amateur dramatic societies were to receive encouragement and assistance of a qualified expert in close touch with the various drama and opera leagues and associations. Under a scheme of "art for the people," four collections of oils and watercolours and drawings, and two collections illustrating good design in small objects would be circulated for exhibition to be held for a month in co-operation with local authorities.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EMPIRE

#### I DOMINIONS

"The British World-Empire is more than an Empire, it is a civilization. It is the Empire of the English language—a quiet but powerful language with a unifying, binding, colonizing force, with which no others, though they have also produced great literature, neither German, nor Italian, nor French, can enter into competition. England is well able to deal with the dissolution of the existing world, and ready to deal with its impatient heirs' attempts to destroy it. She possesses powers of resistance not easily exhausted by an accumulated mass of incompetence and error at the centre of her administrative system, she has still her contribution to make, and, indeed, her task is so far from being fulfilled and her hour passed that there is much to indicate that this great secular organization finds expression in measures of time such as mark the passage of the Catholic Church through ages, and far surpass the records of mere 'empires'."—*This War*, Thomas Mann, p. 40

By the end of the second quarter it was abundantly <sup>Canada</sup> clear that Nazi hopes and some neutral fears that Canadian racial unity would not long survive the strain of war would remain unfulfilled. Indeed, there was evidence that the common burden imposed by the present war was actually helping to remove from the French-Canadian mind the last vestiges of the bitterness created by the introduction of the compulsory service law in the closing months of the Four Years' War. The defeat of the Duplessis administration<sup>1</sup> and Quebec's lively response

<sup>1</sup> See *The First Quarter*, page 231

to recruiting appeals proved that French Canada was prepared voluntarily to bear its share of the war effort. What opposition there was to the policy of full co-operation with the other Allied nations came from the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (the C C F) and the Communist Party. The C C F was not, indeed, in favour of neutrality, in the sense that General Hertzog was in South Africa, but it wished to limit Canada's war effort to the economic sphere. The obvious impracticability of its policy prevented this Party from becoming a serious factor in the Dominion's politics. In the first months there was a good deal of Communist propaganda on approved Stalinist lines, but the Government quickly took drastic steps to prevent its further dissemination.

In January there arose an unexpected political crisis. The provincial legislature of Ontario passed, by a majority of 44 to 10, a vote of censure on the King Ministry's war programme. The vote had been jointly tabled by the Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Hepburn, and the leader of the Provincial Conservative Opposition, Colonel Drew. When the Federal Parliament assembled a week later (January 25) it was announced in the speech from the throne that a general election would immediately be held. The Prime Minister had previously given a pledge to Dr. Manion, leader of the Opposition, that he would not dissolve Parliament before another session had been held, but he now took the view that the action of the Ontario legislature had made it essential to ask for a vote of confidence from the electorate of the whole Dominion. Dr. Manion made a vigorous protest against immediate dissolution, alleging that the Ministry feared to face a parliamentary examination of its war record and programme. The C C F leader, in a more restrained speech, accused Mr. King of acting in an undemocratic manner, but after a four hours' session—the shortest on record—

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Parliament was dissolved. Nominations were to take place on March 11, and polling fifteen days later. There was little doubt that the Liberals would be returned to power, if only because the Opposition had so very few men of proven ability in its ranks that even those who were most critical of the outgoing Ministry were unable to suggest an alternative Cabinet of equal strength. Dr Manion had been leader of the Conservatives for only a year, and his Cabinet experience was slight. The only outstanding Canadian Conservative, Mr Bennett, was living in England. Mr King, on the other hand, had led his Party for twenty years, and had been Premier for thirteen. "None of his contemporaries can match him in experience, and no man in the Dominion knows Canada so well. He is, in the fullest meaning of the term, Canada's first citizen."<sup>1</sup> The Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, ranked next to the great Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the list of French-Canadian statesmen, and commanded universal respect. Colonel J. L. Ralston, Minister of Finance, had proved himself an adroit keeper of the nation's books, while the new Minister of Defence, Mr Norman Rogers, was, in the opinion of one well-informed American,<sup>2</sup> "far superior to Sam Hughes," who had been War Minister in 1914. So little did Mr King allow Party considerations to influence him in the choice of men for extra-Ministerial key positions that some of his followers were accusing him of leaning over backwards, and neglecting men of equal merit within the Party merely because they were Liberals.

In 1918 nearly 40 per cent of all pilots in British service were Canadians, it was fitting, therefore, that the Government should decide to concentrate mainly on the Air Force in its contribution to the Allied war effort, and that

<sup>1</sup> Edgar P. Dean, *Foreign Affairs*, January, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar P. Dean.

the North American Dominion should be the pivot of the Empire Air Training Scheme. Of the planes required for the training scheme, it was planned to manufacture about 1,300 in Canada, except for their engines, and to import from Britain 2,500, and from the United States 600. Of the eighty aerodromes needed, forty were ready for immediate use in January, 1940. In the spring of 1939 the active Canadian Air Force consisted of only 261 officers and 1,930 men, a year later it had a total of 2,400 officers and 28,000 men. By January, 1940, a squadron of the R A F composed solely of Canadians was serving in France, and in February, 1940, the first squadron of the Royal *Canadian* Air Force ever to leave the Dominion arrived in England.

In the fifth month of the war Canada had 70,000 men under arms. The first contingent of the Canadian Overseas Army arrived in England in December. They were under the command of Major-General McNaughton, a valuable addition to the Allied High Command. In the Four Years' War he had produced a formula for locating guns which was adopted by the British and French armies. Because he was still "one of the outstanding artillery men in the world,"<sup>1</sup> it was thought that he would be used on the General Staff rather than as commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. A second Canadian contingent landed in January, and a third in February. The Royal Canadian Navy is not large, but it is extremely efficient. At the end of February fourteen minesweepers were about to be constructed in British Columbia yards. War expenditure for the first year was estimated at 375,000,000 dollars, at least half of which was to be met by taxation. A war loan of 200,000,000 dollars (£45,000,000), bearing interest at 3½ per cent was offered at par on January 15. A few days later it had been

<sup>1</sup> Edgar P. Dean, *op cit*

over-subscribed by more than 48,000,000 dollars.

In February the Dominion and the English-speaking world suffered the loss of Lord Tweedsmuir, who had won an immense popularity in the five years of his Governor-Generalship.

During the second quarter the government of Mr. <sup>Australia</sup> Menzies won steadily increasing support in the country, but encountered considerable opposition in Parliament. Difficulties in the House of Representatives were inevitable, since Mr. Menzies's adherents were in a minority; they numbered only 27, while the Labour Party had 31 members, and the Country Party 16. The largest party in the House was in complete agreement with the Government as to the necessity of supporting the war<sup>1</sup>, but it opposed the dispatch of an expeditionary force to Europe, maintaining that Australia had enough to do to protect her own shores against invasion. The Country Party, on the other hand, was anxious to send more men overseas than the Government thought wise. The majority of the people seemed to favour the middle course taken by Mr. Menzies.

The first contingents of the Second Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force arrived at Suez on February 12, 1940. Shortly afterwards, the Commonwealth Government announced its intention of recruiting another division for service abroad, and also such further troops as were necessary to make up an army corps, which would include two divisions of 16,000 men each, plus corps troops numbering over 16,000, themselves equal to a division. To maintain adequate reinforcements for these troops is estimated to involve raising 90,000 men for the corps and for reinforcements

<sup>1</sup> "Self-government is at stake; the rights of peoples are at stake; the hope for peace and decency on the earth is at stake."—Mr. Curtin, Labour leader.

by June, 1941 The Government also decided to send an army co-operation squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force for training with the A I F , and for subsequent duty in the field The first overseas squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force had landed in England on Boxing Day, 1939 The personnel was fully trained and ready for immediate service with the British Coastal Command

By February, 1940, the Air Force had been increased, apart from the Empire scheme, to 5,400, compared with 2,800 in February, 1939 There had also been an increase in naval personnel from 5,400 before the war, to 11,600, as well as the training of 75,000 militiamen Local defence required the maintenance of over 4,000 permanent troops, 3,000 militiamen who had been permanently called up, and 5,000 garrison units—a total of 12,000 as compared with 4,000 before the war Moreover, immeasurably more man-power was engaged in industry than in 1914–18 Australia was supplying herself, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand with a large variety of munitions By the last year of the last war 2,500 people were engaged in supply and munitions activities in Australia By June, 1942, 17,000 would be employed, many thousands more would be engaged in aircraft construction, in defence works, and in private factories supplying defence orders

The War Cabinet decided in February that the total of Empire Air Scheme recruits to March, 1943, would be 57,473, comprising 14,300 pilots, 16,173 air crews, and 27,000 ground personnel The training programme required that this strength should be built up thus 28,500 by June, 1941, 18,012 by June, 1942, and 10,961 by March, 1943 Thirty-six training schools would be formed at regular intervals up to April, 1942, when the scheme would be fully operative, and to train fitters the Government were establishing an engineering school for

2,000 men Of the 1,728 aircraft required, the United Kingdom would provide 1,160 and the Commonwealth 568 The United Kingdom's quota comprised 591 Avro Ansons, 336 Fairey Battles, and 233 Australian Wirraways, and Australia's quota 82 Wirraways, and 486 elementary trainers All the Wirraways and most of the elementary trainers would be manufactured in Australia, as well as the spare parts, airscrews, parachutes, and other accessories Australian personnel joining the R A F would be grouped, as far as possible, into squadrons earmarked for the infiltration of Australian air crews, and R A A F officers serving in the R A F would also be allotted thereto The whole defence programme involves a total cost, during the first two years of the war, of £A180,000,000, compared with £A60,000,000 in the corresponding period of the last War

Mr R G Casey, Minister of Supply, became the first Australian Minister to the United States in January The Prime Minister said that the appointment represented a great step forward in the development of Australian national policy, particularly in relation to the Pacific, in the peace of which Australia had an immediate and vital interest Reciprocally with Australia's action, the American Government agreed to the establishment of a legation at Canberra

Sir Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Judicial Officer of Papua, died on February 29, 1940, after 36 years' service in Australia's first dependency When Sir Hubert arrived there, Papua, larger in extent than Great Britain, was a territory of Stone Age savages who practised cannibalism and head-hunting When death put an end to his term of office, cannibalism was a thing of the past, and head-hunting had given place to farming These changes were brought about in an astonishingly short time, not with guns and whips, but



with the weapons of the spirit. The Papuans loved Murray. After his death they held a feast for him—the first ever held to commemorate a European. The speaker at the feast said: “Governor Murray died on duty in February, and we remember him and weep. We are thinking of him, and will always think of him, because he guided us well.”

“The scene calls to mind a contrast. In 1894 the Danish explorer, Scavenius, was making his way along the river Tana, in East Africa, and he wrote, ‘The natives were terrified at my white face, for the last white man they had seen was Dr. Peters.’ Peters was a German colonial governor whose cruelties were exposed by the German Social Democrats, and punished by the German Colonial Disciplinary Government. Peters was dismissed from his office. He was before his time, for his methods were those that the Nazis admire. They have now rehabilitated his memory, and made him a hero. With what contempt would they regard Murray, whose death made his subjects weep because he had spread love instead of fear?”<sup>1</sup>

New  
Zealand

During the period under review the expansion of New Zealand's armed forces and the mobilization of her industry proceeded at an ever-increasing speed. The first contingent of the Expeditionary Force, 7,000 strong, arrived at Suez in the middle of February, and the second contingent was then undergoing training. In addition to the territorials, a National Military Reserve of over 35,000 ex-soldiers had been recruited for home defence. In the Four Years' War the Maoris serving with the New Zealand Forces only did pioneer work, but this time a special Maori battalion, officered mainly by Maoris, has been formed for the fighting line. As might be expected in the country whose welfare services were the most advanced in the Commonwealth, the soldiers' training centres were models of their kind.

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, April 13, 1940

The New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy was manned by about 60 per cent New Zealand ratings, and 40 per cent from the United Kingdom. The cruiser *Achilles*, the escort vessels *Leith* and *Wellington*, and the surveying ship *Endeavour* were sent to serve on Empire stations at the Admiralty's request. It is known to history that the crew of the *Achilles* gave a magnificent account of themselves in the Battle of the River Plate.

In December, 500 New Zealand airmen were serving overseas. By the end of February well over 4,000 men had registered for training as air pilots. As a first objective under the Empire Air Training Scheme, New Zealand undertook to train 10,000 men as pilots, observers, and gunners. The scheme will cost the Dominion £7,000,000 for a three-year period, during which the Government will have to meet air costs in New Zealand itself estimated at £13,000,000. The total cost of maintaining New Zealand's armed forces for the six months ended March, 1940, was about £7,350,000. For the financial year 1940-41, it was estimated that expenses would be about £13,000,000, while expenses overseas, including the full initial equipment for the New Zealand Division, would be about £20,000,000.

The whole of New Zealand was united in its determination to see the war through, but there was much disagreement between Government and Opposition on internal affairs. Mr. Savage's administration was Socialist, and was pledged to the carrying out of a far-reaching programme of reform. The Opposition maintained that in the interests of national (as well as imperial) unity the Government's domestic policy should be abandoned and that the *status quo ante* the war should be preserved. The Ministry was unable to accept this proposal, but Mr. Savage promised that they would "refrain from con-

sciously endeavouring to use the war for the furtherance of their domestic policy ”

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand Amendment Act and the Marketing Amendment Act were the measures to which the Opposition raised most objection. The first placed the Bank completely under national control, the second enabled the State to purchase or acquire any classes of goods and sell or otherwise dispose of them for consumption or use in New Zealand or elsewhere. It enabled the Government to sell direct to Britain practically the whole exportable supply of wool, frozen meat, skins and hides, butter and cheese, “at prices and terms that are generally considered reasonable, and on conditions which correspond closely to those upon which Canadian and Australian produce has been purchased ”<sup>1</sup> The Opposition were against this Bill because the Government intended to keep it in force after the war.

In February, 1940, New Zealand celebrated her 100th birthday, for it was on February 6, 1840, that Commander Hobson signed the Treaty of Waitangi with the Maoris. There is no more inspiring chapter in the history of the Commonwealth than that which tells how a native Polynesian race and a band of British settlers worked together to form this small but great nation. Here, indeed, on the shore of the South Pacific is a most convincing refutation of the puerile racial theories with which the Nazis have bedevilled the German mind. Herr Hitler’s educational directors have instructed their charges to search the pages of history for instances of British baseness and barbarity. They have, no doubt, discovered the Maori Wars of 1861–71, but did they notice Lord Stanley’s reply, in 1843, to the suggestion of the Chairman of the New Zealand Company that the Treaty of Waitangi should be broken on the ground that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Round Table*, March, 1940

made with "naked savages," and was "merely a praiseworthy device for amusing and pacifying them for the moment"? Lord Stanley "entertains a different view of the respect due to obligations contracted by the Crown of England, and his final answer to the demands of the company must be that he will not admit that any person or Government can contract a legal, moral, or honorary obligation to despoil others of their lawful and equitable rights." It is because Lord Stanley and his successors entertained "a different view" that the Maoris have continued joyfully to co-operate with their British fellow-citizens.

At the end of the first quarter there was still evidence to support the pessimist in the opinion that the coming of war had, racially speaking, split the Union in two, and that General Smuts would have to rely almost exclusively on people of British origin or descent to carry out his policy of full co-operation with the sister-members of the Commonwealth. There were even those who predicted that, as in 1914, participation in a "British" war would ultimately lead to open rebellion on the part of extremist Afrikaners. During the second quarter, however, it gradually became clear that the Government's policy was winning over more and more Afrikaners, and by February, 1940, General Smuts was assured of the support of many of the near-Republicans who, in September, had opposed him.

The thinning of the ranks of the Union's neutrals was due to a combination of factors. In the first place, Nazi methods of warfare and declarations of aims did nothing to reassure those who had originally refused to believe in the German menace. In the second, participation in the war had not caused any considerable dislocation in the normal life of South Africa. At first, there had been an increase in unemployment coupled with a rise in

prices, but the Government's statesmanlike economic dispositions had quickly checked these tendencies. The generous terms on which the United Kingdom was purchasing wool and maize had made the production of these more profitable than before, while other commercial interests discovered that the war had brought increased opportunities.

A third important factor in the strengthening of Smuts's position was the maladroit manœuvring of the Opposition. At the end of January General Hertzog asked the House of Assembly to declare that the time had come for the ending of the war with Germany and the restoration of peace; and in his opening speech the ex-Premier expressed sentiments so strongly pro-Nazi that to General Smuts they sounded "like a chapter out of *Mein Kampf*." Other members of the House agreed in thinking that even Goebbels could not have done better. The effect of Hertzog's words may be judged from the fact that his motion was defeated by 81 votes to 59, while the September motion supporting participation in the war had only been approved by 80 votes to 67.

Five months after the outbreak of war agreement was reached between General Hertzog's section of the United Party and the Nationalist (Republican) Party of Dr. Malan. Thenceforward they sat together as the Reunited National or People's Party, sharing the conviction that a "Republican form of government, separated from the British Crown, is best suited to the traditions and aspirations of the South African people."

Early in January, 1940, two Government proclamations, one giving the names of enemy firms in neutral countries and the other laying down regulations for the searching of merchant ships which left enemy ports after December 4, 1939, brought the Union into line with British regulations for the blockade of Germany. The second order had

a special constitutional interest, having been made under the Royal Executive Functions and Seals Act on behalf of the King

An important declaration of policy was made by the Prime Minister when, on February 7, he moved the second reading of the War Measures Bill. He informed the House that the time had come to clear away all doubts about the Union's military boundaries. It was the Government's intention to give assistance to the British territories right up to the Equator. "If you think you can effectively defend the Union when a powerful enemy is in possession of these British territories beyond the Zambesi, you are making the biggest mistake possible." General Smuts also made it known that the Union had offered the British Government facilities for training airmen in South Africa. Later in the same month members of the Defence Forces were accorded the right to volunteer for service outside the Union. Further evidence of the close co-operation existing between the Union and its British neighbours in Southern Africa had been provided in January, when the Union Government released some thirty doctors for service in Kenya.

South Africa's Lord Haw-Haw continued to bray. Speaking from Zeesen, he claimed that he got his information about the Union from the Man in the Moon. "All Moonshine," agreed the Union Government's Information Officer in one of the nightly broadcasts in which he contrasted Haw-Haw's lunar flights with the solid facts of the veldt.

## 2 INDIA

As recorded in *The First Quarter*,<sup>1</sup> the Congress Party had, in reply to the Viceroy's statement that Dominion

<sup>1</sup> Page 249

status was India's goal, put forward a demand for a constituent assembly to undertake the framing of a new constitution. It was claimed that the assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage. Minorities would be represented by members elected by separate electorates, but would not be entitled to voting power beyond their numerical strength, their rights would be "protected to their satisfaction" and details not settled by agreement would be referred to arbitration. Mr Gandhi thought that "the constituent assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. To-day," he said, "we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organizations to question, as they do question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Moslem League is undoubtedly the largest organization representing Moslems, but several Moslem bodies, by no means insignificant, deny its claim to represent them. But the constituent assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportions. Except it there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it there can be no finality to communal and other claims." This eloquent statement of the case for a constituent assembly did not convince the Moslem League. Mr Jinnah replied that the assembly would be merely another edition of Congress, and in it minorities would be powerless to influence the verdict as to the nature and form of the constitution.

The strength of communal feeling was demonstrated in a striking fashion when Mr Jinnah called upon the Moslems to observe Friday, December 22, as a Day of Thanksgiving for deliverance from "the tyranny, oppression, and injustice" of Congress Provincial Governments.

This appeal, and the consequent increased bitterness between Congress and the Moslems, prevented further discussion of communal differences between Mr Jinnah and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Attacked by the Moslem League for its alleged persecution of Moslems, Congress was at the same time bitterly assailed by the orthodox Hindu Mahasabha—a body more akin to the League in its communal outlook than to Congress—for its efforts to placate Moslem opinion.

On December 23, Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, delivered a brilliant Convocation Address at Benares Hindu University, in which he examined the proposal for a constituent assembly. He reminded his audience that "constituent assemblies which have sought to combine the securing of unity among diverse elements with the writing of the constitution itself have not always had happy results, and he emphasized that the successful constitutions evolved in Canada, Australia, and South Africa were in each case hammered out by a small number of delegates"<sup>1</sup>. Sir Maurice's address had the effect of inducing moderate Congressmen to examine their own proposals more realistically.

A few weeks later, Lord Linlithgow made an important pronouncement at the Orient Club in Bombay. He deplored the resignation of the Congress Ministries and the suspension of preparations for the establishment of federation. In his view, the federation plan provided a solution of all the problems confronting the country, since it would mean the inclusion of responsible Ministers in the Central Government, the association of the Indian States with British India, and the representation of all the minorities along lines approved by themselves. As for the new demand of Congress. His Majesty's Government had made it clear that the objective for India was

<sup>1</sup> *Round Table*, March, 1940



Dominion status. They were prepared to consider reopening discussion of the Act of 1935 (the Federation Act) as soon as practicable after the War, and in the meantime to expand the Executive Council of the Governor-General to include a small number of political leaders. The Viceroy emphasized the need for compromise as between the various political and communal interests and urged that they should endeavour to reach some measure of agreement among themselves.

The Viceroy's speech was well received by Congress, who regarded it as marking an advance on previous official declarations. The Liberals expressed themselves as well satisfied by the promise of Dominion status,<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Gandhi raised high hopes by declaring that the speech "seemed to contain the germs of a settlement honourable to both nations." He said, further, that he was anxious for a compromise solution, that he had not lost faith in Britain, and that he believed in the Viceroy's sincerity. In view of the warm tone of this statement, the Viceroy invited Mr. Gandhi to another conference. Unfortunately, the meeting produced no tangible result. It had been "very friendly," and Mr. Gandhi had expressed his appreciation of the spirit in which the Viceroy's proposals had been put forward, but he made it clear that, in his view, they did not at this stage meet the full demands of the Congress Party."

On the day following his meeting with Mr. Gandhi, the Viceroy interviewed Mr. Jinnah, and assured him that he need be under no apprehension that His Majesty's Government would neglect the interests of the minorities. No further advance was made towards the solution of the constitutional problem during the second quarter. The

<sup>1</sup> "To those who remember how such an authoritative statement was sought to be evaded until almost the other day, it cannot but be highly satisfactory that . . . the King's representative . . . should make an unqualified declaration in this behalf." *The Leader* (Allahabad).

most unsatisfactory feature of the situation was the increased tension between Congress and the Moslem League

"There is a growing tendency," wrote the *Round Table*,<sup>1</sup> "for many Moslems to regard the present deadlock as satisfactory, solely because the Congress Governments have ceased to function, and there is an inclination for prominent Moslems to describe their community as a nation possessing equal rights with a Hindu nation which shares the same country. Congress spokesmen assert that, if the British authorities were to concede a declaration of independence, the Moslems, being no longer able to rely on British authority for the maintenance of their rights, would turn to the majority community to seek agreement on their problems. The Moslems do not favour such a solution, but it is clear that they cannot indefinitely be vested with the power to veto legitimate constitutional advance, and it would seem that Moslem proposals for their future should be clearly stipulated, so that such advance may be possible. Some believe that this function should be assumed by the Viceroy—that he should convene a conference at which the specific claims of the various communities would be tabulated."

In the middle of February it was reported<sup>2</sup> that the supporters of the Aga Khan, who is head of the Ismaili Mohammedans, were challenging Mr M A Jinnah's claim, as president of the Moslem League, to represent the entire Moslem community, while the more moderate sections of the League, headed by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Punjab's Premier, were anxious for a settlement with Congress. The Aga Khan had warmly endorsed the proposal made by Mr Patel, a former Congress president, that instead of a constituent assembly, there should be a national convention on the basis of the provincial electorates. As a demonstration of its "national"

<sup>1</sup> March, 1940

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, February 13, 1941

character the Congress Party elected a Moslem, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, to be its president at the end of February

The author has made no attempt to minimize the complexity of the problems which confront His Majesty's Government in India. Affecting an area equal to the whole of Europe without Russia and a population one-fifth that of the whole world—a population withal, that contains innumerable diversities of race, religion, and culture—these problems can be solved neither easily nor quickly. But that ultimately they will be solved to the satisfaction of every interest in the vast sub-continent is the determination of His Majesty's Government. There is, moreover, an increasing awareness of the Indian problem among the ordinary people of Britain. Conscious of past errors, proud of past achievements, and without any desire to exploit India, the average Englishman confidently anticipates the day when an independent and united Indian nation will take its place at the side of the other members of the British Commonwealth.

In September, 1939, the thoughts of many Englishmen had turned anxiously to India, for it seemed that the coming of war must enormously complicate the already sufficiently difficult task of leading India along the road to nationhood. The uncompromisingly difficult attitude adopted by the Congress Party and the subsequent resignation of seven Congress Ministries were represented by enemy propagandists as the beginning of the end of British rule in India, and, as we have seen, the solution of the communal problem was no nearer at the end of the second quarter. Nevertheless, there were very real reasons for thinking that there would be no worsening in the political situation, indeed, that it would probably improve. There were many signs that an increasing number of Indian Nationalists who had at first been

disinclined to look realistically at the international situation were beginning to realize that the defeat of Britain in Europe would mean indefinite postponement of the realization of their dreams. The prospect of being ruled either by Nazi Germany or by one of her Axis partners was far from pleasing to political leaders who had regarded with increasing horror each successive Axis aggression from Manchuria onwards.

The Fascist-Nazi "ideology" had never appealed to the Indian mind, but before August, 1939, there had been not a few politically conscious Indians who had looked to Moscow for guidance. The Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact came as a shock to many of these. For most of them, the Soviet attack on Finland completed the disillusionment. Pandit Nehru, next to Mr. Gandhi the most potent political figure in India, and one who had strong Communist sympathies, outspokenly condemned the Russian aggression.

"Soviet Russia," he wrote, "had bartered away her moral prestige and the friendship of many of her friends for seeming political advantage. With the invasion of Finland, Russia lined herself with the aggressor nations and thereby was false to the traditions she had herself nourished for these many years. She has paid heavily for this vital error and paid in a coin which cannot be counted, for it is made up of the wishes and ideals of innumerable human beings. There are those who have made it their creed to defend every activity of the Soviet Government and who consider it heresy or lese-majesty for anyone to criticize or condemn any such activity. That is the way of blind faith which has nothing to do with reason. It is not on that basis that we can build up freedom here or elsewhere. Integrity of mind and sincerity of purpose can be given up only at peril to ourselves and to our cause. We are not tied down to any decisions made for us elsewhere, we make our own decisions and fashion our own policy. . . . In the war

against Finland our sympathies are for the people of Finland who have struggled so gallantly to preserve their freedom. . . . Our objectives will not be achieved through violence or authoritarianism or opportunism of the moment. We must adhere to non-violence and right action and evolve through this the free India for which we labour."

Because of Mr. Nehru's immense prestige with members of the Left Wing of the Congress Party it may be presumed that his statement had a not inconsiderable effect.

This growing awareness of the realities of the external political situation had a moderating effect upon Indian Nationalists. Many violent words were uttered but there were no signs of any serious attempt to interfere with India's war effort. The men required as recruits for the Army were forthcoming ; assistance in money from the princes and others continued to be offered ; and there was a great extension of India's effort in the field of supply. By January, 1940, Indian units were serving in France.

### 3 : THE COLONIAL EMPIRE

West India  
Royal  
Commis-  
sion

The West India Royal Commission, appointed in August, 1938, to investigate social and economic conditions in the West Indies and to make recommendations thereon, submitted their Report to the King in December, 1939. It was decided not to make the full text of the Report public, but the Commission's recommendations were published in a *Statement of Policy on Colonial Development and Welfare* in February, 1940, and it was announced that the Government would act upon the findings of the Commission without delay. The Government accepted in principle the main recommendations for a special organization under a Comptroller to develop the social services throughout the West Indies, and for the provision by the United

Kingdom Exchequer for this purpose of funds of the order of £1,000,000 a year. They also accepted the recommendation for the appointment of an Inspector-General of Agriculture for the West Indies. The other recommendations which are numerous and far-reaching were under active consideration in consultation with the Governors and the Government expressed their intention to act as early as possible in the spirit of the recommendations as a whole. The Government's statement of policy covered a much wider field than the West Indies. It contained the conclusions from a close examination into Colonial problems which the Government had been conducting for some time before the War, and it provided for an important extension of their Colonial policy. In future, greatly increased provision would be made for development and welfare throughout the Colonial Empire. Mr Amery's Colonial Development Fund of a maximum of £1,000,000 a year set up in 1930 had proved a very valuable instrument for Colonial development. But it was inadequate both in amount and in scope for the larger purposes which the Government had now in mind. The Government proposed to introduce legislation providing for assistance from United Kingdom funds up to £5,000,000 a year for Colonial development and welfare, and, in addition, up to £500,000 a year to assist in the various fields of Colonial research.

In spite of the demands of war they proposed to proceed with this policy as far and as fast as the exigencies of the times permitted. The policy applied without distinction to Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories.

The decision not to publish the Report was criticized by the Opposition, but the announcement that the reforms suggested would be immediately instituted was greeted with intense satisfaction by every party in Britain and throughout the Empire. The publication of the *Statement*

*of Policy* marked the beginning of a new era in Colonial administration. It was also a magnificent reply to Nazi propaganda. Hitherto, under the terms of the Colonial Development Act, the British Government had given financial assistance only to schemes strictly concerned with the economic or material development of the Colonies. Thus education (apart from technical education) was beyond the range of their help. Under the Government's new proposals, they would widen the whole field of help and give regular aid to the education services of the Colonies, which would be the greatest contribution of all to their emancipation.

Another limitation on our power to help was to be swept away. Hitherto we had been able to give assistance only to the capital cost of development schemes. Unless, the Colonial Government concerned could afford to pay the running costs the schemes never came into being at all. The principle had been that each Colony should be a self-supporting unit, that its people should have only those services which, whether rich or poor, it could afford to maintain out of its own resources. That principle was now to go. Under the Government's new proposals they would be able to assist Colonial Governments not only in the initial establishment, but also in the more prolonged upkeep of any of those services which were needed for the proper welfare of the peoples of the Colonies.

It was made known in January that at the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, after consultation with the Governors concerned, Lord Hailey would pay a visit to a number of the British Dependencies in West, East, and Central Africa, to undertake an informal study of certain aspects of native administration in pursuance of the work which he had already done in this subject during his earlier visit in connection with the preparation of the "African Survey". It was expected that Lord Hailey's

inquiries, which would start in the West African territories, would take about six months. His attention would in the main be directed to the comparative study of forms of native administration, its technical working, and future development.

At the end of the tour Lord Hailey would spend a short time in Southern Rhodesia, and the Government of that Colony had offered to facilitate an unofficial study, for purposes of comparison, of the principles and methods followed in their native administration. Such a comparison would be of value when further consideration was being given to the questions of native policy in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland to which attention had been directed in the recent Report of the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission.

The decision, taken during the second quarter, to permit British subjects of other than pure European descent to hold emergency commissions in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, caused great satisfaction in the Colonial Empire.

In February a Northern Rhodesian contingent reached <sup>N</sup>Rhodes Nairobi, Kenya, after a 2,000-mile mechanized *safari* from Lusaka. Its arrival completed the concentration in Kenya of troops from every British East and Central African territory. The expedition consisted of 200 lorries, driven by Rhodesian natives, and bearing soldiers, equipment, and stores.

Hitler's description of the African as a "semi-ape," <sup>Gold Coast</sup> whom it is a "sin against reason" to educate, has not done much to help Nazi propagandists in the Gold Coast. "The attitude of the Gold Coast towards the war against Nazi intolerance has found expression in a number of striking utterances. If Hitler should prove victorious, and should send his henchmen to replace the British as our rulers," said one chief at a public meeting held in a village near Accra, "I will hang myself rather than serve him. But



first," he added, "I shall take care to poison all my descendants so that they, too, may be saved from slavery." At another meeting I heard an African doctor, speaking in level, unemotional tones, tell his audience: "You ask me how much I prize liberty? This is how much I prize it. If I had two houses, one in Nazi Germany and the other in hell, and I had to take up residence in one of them, I should not hesitate. I'd choose the one in hell." In one tiny bush village the registrar of the native court produced an apt description of the Führer. "He is," he said, "a graduate of the university of empty braggartings and garrulous vociferations."<sup>1</sup>

The members of the Kilimanjaro native co-operative union in Tanganyika Territory contributed £1,000 for purposes connected with the War. A letter accompanying the gift stated that it was the wish of the contributors that it should be used to help African troops, and went on:

"It is the aim of the Chagga people to do whatever they can to help the Government to win the War, so that we Africans can eventually live in peace and happiness under the guardianship of His Majesty King George VI and under the British flag."

A native chieftainess in Swaziland collected £19 2s. from the people of her kraal, and took it thirty miles to give to the District Commissioner as their contribution to the War Fund.

Malaya

The Malayan Federal Council unanimously agreed to making Britain a gift of £1,000,000 towards the prosecution of the War. The High Commissioner said that the sum was a large one, and quite beyond the resources of most Colonial Governments, but "we are glad and proud to give it, and perhaps later we shall be able to offer yet another gift out of our accumulated balances. It has been

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, Gold Coast correspondent, March 25, 1940.

brought home to us that by its ability to supply essential raw materials, such as tin, rubber, and palm oil, whereby it becomes a veritable treasure house of foreign exchange, Malaya is by far the most valuable unit of the Colonial Empire in the economic prosecution of the War."

Raja Uda, speaking for the Malays, said that, though the conflict was thousands of miles away, they felt that their security was at stake. This was not a war of aggrandisement, but a fight for freedom and justice, on which the existence of the small nations depended.

The Banabans, a native community in Ocean Island,<sup>1</sup> Pacific in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony in the Western Pacific, gave £10,000 as a contribution to British war funds. It had been suggested to them by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific that £2,000 would represent a generous donation, but they expressed a unanimous wish that the larger amount should be given "as a token of their loyalty to His Majesty, and to the cause of the British Government, under whose protection they have lived since 1901."

<sup>1</sup> Ocean Island produces phosphate and is perhaps the richest in the world for its size.



# *Part Three*

## *Outlooks and Attitudes*



## CHAPTER VI

### OUTLOOKS AND ATTITUDES OF FRIENDLY NEUTRALITY, NEUTRAL NEUTRALITY, NEUTRALITY, NON- (OR PRE-) BELLIGERENCY

Readers of *The First Quarter* may remember that, in his Chapter V, the author attempted a brief analytical sketch of the outlooks and attitudes of the Powers, great and small, shortly before and up to the end of the period described. He does not propose to repeat this process for the second three months, save for countries particularly affected or of emergent immediate interest or importance. These, in addition to belligerents and invaded territories, would appear to fall into groups: those contiguous to Germany and Russia in Northern Europe—the Baltic States, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries; to the South, the Balkan-Danubian lands, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Spain, and Italy; and, remote in distance but near in urgency, the Far East, and the Far West, China, Japan, and America. Mention of other countries will be mainly incidental.

During the second quarter of this war attitudes tended to become more equivocal as outlooks became more obscure. There was a constant and liberal distribution and exchange of criticism, blame, and protest amongst belligerents and neutrals, great and small—by the small to the Allies as loud as they felt, to the Nazis as loud as they dared. The reception (for there was but rarely admission) of such diatribes was both interesting and instructive. The Germans took the line consistently maintained in their “peace-time” negotiations with Austrians, Czechs, and Poles, namely, that any theory or practice of neutrality implying less than one hundred per cent acceptance

were able to compare the conduct and morale of the combatants with the grotesque and ludicrous communiqués of the Soviet Government, and to draw their own inferences—all inevitably in favour of a free people fighting against incredible odds to maintain their freedom. The spectacle further evoked the admiring sympathy of the greater anti-democratic neutrals :

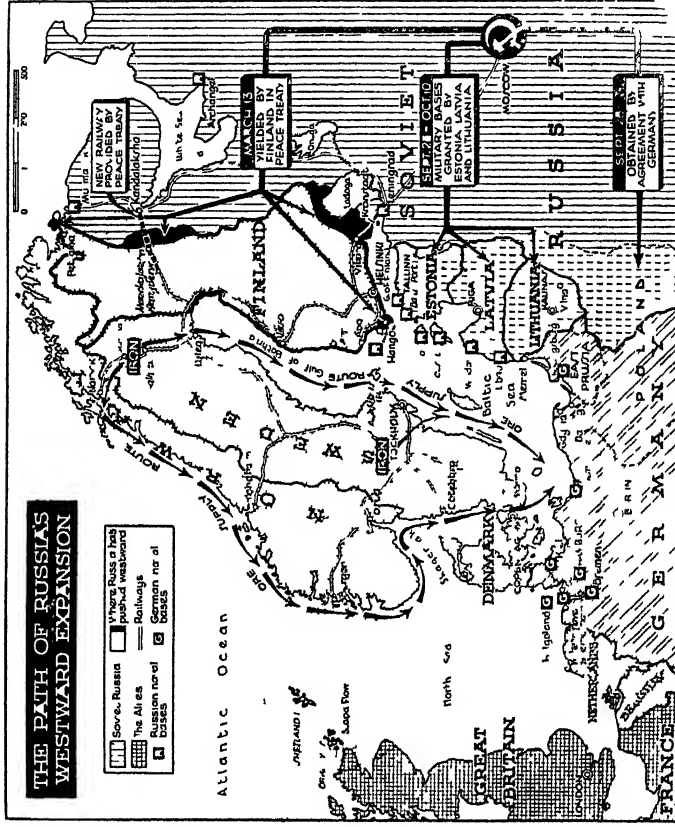
“even the ranks of Tuscany  
Could scarce forbear to cheer”

and moved what is left of natural feeling under Nazism to a reluctant and interested indignation, particularly with regard to the holding up of Russian supplies for Germany : “Not only the disgrace and dishonour, Monster, but an infinite loss.”

This chapter deals with neutral, rather than with belligerent, outlooks ; and among the neutrals it would be superfluous to do more than summarize any developments save those which have already had, or seemed likely to have, an external effect upon the general war situation.

Baltic  
States

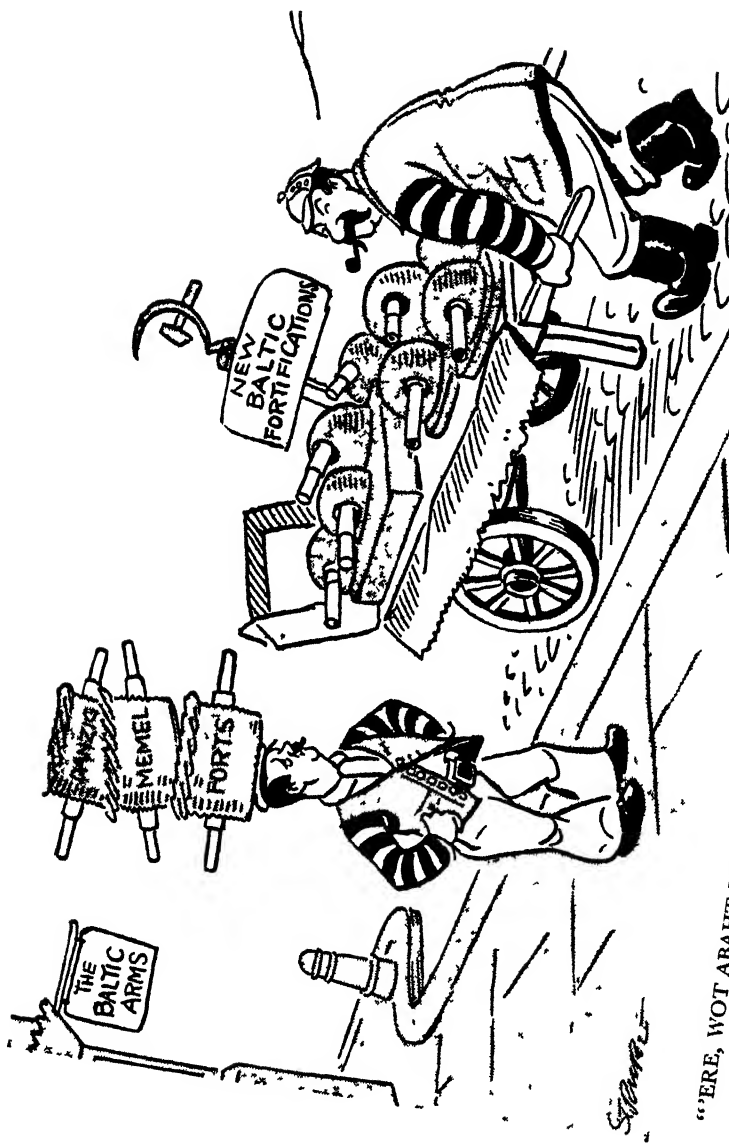
The official as well as the unofficial sympathies of the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, were strongly with Finland, but could obviously not be proclaimed as such. Their Presidents nevertheless dispatched congratulations to the President of Finland on December 8, Finnish Independence Day, their Press continued to praise the Finns, and their Governments did not recognize the puppet Communist Government. The Council of Lithuanian Rabbis proclaimed on February 8 a fast in sympathy with the Jewish German-occupied Poland, of whom 40,000 had died through hunger, exposure, and the hardships of the expulsions. Before the end of December the “repatriation” of the Balts to Gdynia and to the Reich had been completed. Out of 15,000 eligible people in Estonia, 12,000 elected to go, while 3,000 preferred to



by the path of the

THE PATH OF RUSSIA'S WESTWARD EXPANSION





"ERE, WOT ABAHT IT?" "WOT ABAHT WOT?" "WOT ABAHT THAT 'ERE FRIENDSHIP  
PACT?" WELL, WOT ABAHT IT?"

*By kind permission of the Daily Express*

*Silas*

remain where their ancestors had made their homes for some seven centuries. Of the 60,000 in Latvia, 15,000 stayed, and 45,000 left to Germanize the Polish provinces annexed by the Reich. Various trade agreements had been concluded with the Soviet and Nazi Governments, amongst them a contract by Estonia to supply Germany with a million litres of potato-spirit, a potentially disastrous fuel-beverage adapted equally for motor as for human consumption. Lithuania agreed with Germany for the transit of goods between Germany, Russia, and Manchukuo. By mid-February, doubts of Finland's capacity to withstand the pressure of myriads began to be felt. Staff talks began in Tallinn between the Estonian and Latvian Chiefs of Staff, and on the same day the President of Latvia broadcast a solemn warning.

"We do not know what is in store for us. I bid each of you to look to his equipment." Before the end of the month the term of military service for conscripts was raised from twelve to eighteen months.

"The superabundance of territory is so great that one is justified in saying that Northern Sweden, Finland, and the other Baltic States are under-populated. Not one of these small nationalities has a right to independent existence"—Dr Hauschofer, Chief of the Propaganda for German Culture and Science Abroad Scand  
navia

The three Scandinavian States, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway found themselves on December 1 isolated suddenly and without warning in the midst of the dark forest. Their sympathies and then interests were wrapped up in the cause of Finland. All three loathed and dreaded Bolshevism, and the vast majority in all had long lost whatever affinities they had ever felt for German *kultur* on its absorption and disappearance into Nazism. They had legitimately, successfully, and not unprofitably maintained their neutrality throughout the previous War, and

had seemed entitled to repeat the process during this, though doubly penalized in losses—of trade through the Allied blockade, and of ships and lives by German bombs, mines, and torpedoes. In Denmark, particularly, industry had been hard hit, and every third worker was unemployed, largely through inadequate supplies of iron and coal. They emerged from the second quarter with their neutralities and integrities unimpaired, but without much glory, or even credit for farsightedness in the eyes of some other nations, censoriously prone to deplore in others the lack of heroisms and altruisms they were far from displaying themselves. Finland was fighting the battles of Sweden and Norway no less surely than Czechoslovakia had been prepared to fight those of France and Britain—than France and Britain were now fighting that of the United States. And one non-interventionist after another would inquire how the rest could not see where their true interests and honour lay—and act accordingly. Such sentiments, it will be remembered, increase in intensity with the square of the distance from immediate ruinous risk. The Allies—the French Press more outspokenly—felt them for Sweden and Norway. But as we thought of Scandinavia, so did the United States of us, both at this juncture and in 1938 after Munich. What the world thinks of the United States it would be only less difficult to establish than to ascertain exactly what Providence thinks of its “own country.” About its chosen people it certainly showed itself, on occasion, both direct and explicit.

On December 3, the German Press opened a campaign against Hr Sandler, the Swedish Foreign Minister, on the grounds that his foreign policy was pro-Ally. By the middle of the month the Cabinet had resigned, and been reformed without Hr Sandler, whose resignation was dated December 2, whereas those of all his colleagues were dated December 13. There are decencies more

shocking than nakedness unashamed. The Prime Minister of Denmark, in an allocution to the Press, echoed the general gloom of the Scandinavian New Year. "I am personally more depressed than I ever have been before," and by January 10 the Swedish Riksdag had passed and put into application what amounted to a complete Defence of the Realm Act. But the people and the Press of Sweden and of Norway alike showed, and proved their feelings far more openly than their Governments dared, or even (it was said) approved. Contingents of well-armed and organized volunteers poured from both into Finland, while leading newspapers, commenting upon German attacks against seamen, did not mince their words. "These men are not at war, they are doing their usual work. They can offer no resistance. Nevertheless, they are killed in cold blood. This is really murder, and those who commit it can be called nothing but murderers."<sup>1</sup>

Of the sinking of the Danish *Chastine Maerk*, sailing to Denmark from another neutral country with a cargo of artificial manure, it was remarked that the only motive seemed to be that she was a ship upon the sea. In sharp and almost comic contrast with these plain home truths was an address delivered by the Norwegian Premier, Dr Koht, whose attitude throughout had not enjoyed an altogether happy world Press. In it he described the *Altmark* incident, in which no neutral ship or man was even touched, as "the most gross violation of neutrality since the war began." This did not seem to be the opinion of unofficial Norway, for the *Dagbladet* recorded that "the slaughter of defenceless sailors excites us in a way which cannot be compared with the offence taken at encroachments made by the other side", and the Seamen's Associations presented him with a resolution declaring

<sup>1</sup> *Aftenposten* of Norway, November 4, 1939

that, while no one could frighten them into abandoning their ships, they could ask their members "not to sail in ships carrying cargo to that belligerent nation which has as its proud aim the murder of defenceless sailors "

A climax seemed to be nearing towards the end of February, when Danish trawlers returning from the Dogger Bank reported that they dared no longer continue fishing there. Aircraft plied ceaselessly overhead. One vessel had been fired on and one sunk, and her crew drowned. By the 25th fifty-one Norwegian ships and 357 men had been lost, and fifteen Swedish steamers had been sunk and fifteen were missing, not one reply had been received from the German Government to any of the Notes addressed to them on these sinkings. Instead, as Herr Guntler, the Swedish Foreign Secretary pointed out, they were threatening the smaller neutrals, actually "denouncing as unneutral statements of mere fact about illegal sinkings or criticisms levelled at the Powers whose forces carried out the sinkings," causing the Swedish Press to ask, "are the present rulers of Germany really just as blind as were the advisers of the Emperor twenty-five years ago?"

But neutral governments, in their natural and intelligible prayer to be allowed to maintain their neutrality, still seemed disposed to allow Germany to proceed to any extremes—short of actual invasion, and although Mr Churchill, with characteristic inability to leave an "i" undotted or a 't' uncrossed, spelt them out an alternative duty, his advice was resented, ostensibly with indignation, and exploited by Nazi propaganda as yet another example of Britain fighting her battle with alien blood upon alien soil. The *Altmark* incident, in addition to its dash as an exploit, had the further advantage of seeming to set a term upon British tolerance and punctilio, giving not only

a positive hint, but a practical lead into the enhanced possibilities of combined drastic action.

By the end of February the general opinion was well summarized as follows:

"With the fullest sympathy for Sweden and Norway, one cannot but wonder if they have acted with complete wisdom with regard to this small, heroic nation that in effect, is defending their frontiers. While they remain outside the war, it is true, they are able to send volunteers and supplies to Finland. No one can doubt where their sympathies lie, and we have to recognize, as they are rather bitterly realizing to-day, that they have no military establishment for the actual world in which we live. They cannot fail to see the perils by which they are surrounded. If they went to the aid of Finland, they might be attacked by Germany, and though an invasion from the sea is not the simplest of all operations, and they could count on the help of the Allies, they quite naturally wish to keep their countries out of the war."<sup>1</sup>

All contacts with belligerents involve attitudes, situations, and atmospheres of considerable delicacy, not did Belgium or Holland, both heavily overlaid by Nazi Germany, find their position any exception to this general rule. It was, indeed, the hardest for the three surviving smaller neutral groups, for though Scandinavia controlled important sources of supply in her iron mines and timber forests and the Balkans even more vital provision of oil and wheat, the Low Countries offered not only the principal entry and exit of seaborne imports or exports, but also, if successfully violated, as was Belgium in 1914, the hope, never abandoned by German strategists, of turning the French lines of defence and of supplying formidably closer air and submarine bases for attacking Great Britain. Their commerce was, indeed, subjected to grave inconveniences and losses by the British blockade, but the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Spectator*, March 1, 1940

inconveniences were mainly those of irksome formalities, and the losses chiefly of time, and so of trade and of money ; whereas the losses inflicted by Germans on the peaceful shipping of these two small neutrals amounted to 22 vessels, of a total tonnage of 100,000, with an ascertained minimum of 192 lives, by torpedo, mine, bomb, and machine-gun, as often as not without warning, and in circumstances affording the crews no chance whatever of saving their lives. Throughout these months not one single neutral ship, not one single neutral life was forfeited by the combined operations of the Allied forces, whether by land, sea or air. Meanwhile, the necessary mobilization of 600,000 Belgians was costing their country nearly a million belgas or £600,000, and the Dutch a proportionate sum.

**Belgium**

The Belgian Government, reformed early in January into a Ministry of National Union, did not cease to maintain a scrupulously correct neutrality, but the people and to a certain extent their Press were unable to conceal their sentiments which, they are well aware, coincided here with their interests and are enwrapped with the fortunes of the allied cause—which is indeed the cause of all small independent nations, and of these, most particularly Belgium. This attitude evoked a series of protests and visits by the German Ambassador to the Belgian Foreign Office. Such increasingly heavy pressure was exerted through ominous and individual approaches, radio and Press attacks and open menaces, that pro-Ally enthusiasms were not indeed diminished, but to a certain extent driven underground.

Although Belgian commerce suffered severely until the end of 1939, industrialists were not slow to perceive possibilities in taking over and developing certain markets lost to Germany by the blockade ; so much so that Germans threatened punishment for this economic

unneutrality by cutting off her coke and coal exports to Belgium. Meanwhile, to a menacing ground-bass, the frontier restrictions were being continually tightened.

Alarms and excursions and confused noise from with-~~Holland~~ out, though neither so pronounced as those of November, continued to characterize German policy towards the Dutch, who declared themselves ruefully and truthfully between Scylla and Charybdis, the devil and the deep blue sea (the Royal Navy being cast for the latter role), the hammer and the anvil, or—one remarked to the author—"as a British official in Palestine". In the unfortunately necessary diversion of trade routes Amsterdam, one of the great distributing centres of Europe, has been one of the severest sufferers. The particular variant of the Nazi "sickening technique" practised against Holland in order to force her to conform to the German conception of neutrality was by sea, the totalitarian *schrecklichkeit* (now needing no further description). If this were so described in the Dutch Press, or indeed described at all, or if it were desirable for any other reason to tighten the screw, then dramatically rapid and "secret" frontier activities would begin, and a Press barrage would be let down; either of which having more or less served its purpose, there would be a relaxation of tension, and the Allies would be accused of "war-mongering", of having engineered the scare so as to bring smaller neutrals into "their" war. But the effect of the technique grew steadily feebler. By mid-December the Dutch water defences, combined with the "guerilla cement line,"<sup>1</sup> rendered "the whole of Holland now a fortress of great strength," so that a sudden surprise invasion seemed no longer a possible operation. Nevertheless January saw another drive on the November model, when German troop movements began again and a German aeroplane was brought down

<sup>1</sup> As General Duymaer van Twist announced in Parliament.



over Belgium. The pilot attempted to burn his papers, but they were seized, and the contents gave cause for Belgian anxiety.

On the whole, the danger of an attack seemed to be receding. Against the well-trained armies of Holland and Belgium it would have proved a costly business. It was amusingly significant that no publicist in the world had the hardihood to suggest that Germany was or could be deterred, as England had been in Scandinavia, by considerations of respect of the neutral powers involved. A Belgian writer has well observed that

“ there is an essential difference between Dutch and Belgian neutrality in this war. Holland has received no guarantees and has asked for no pledges beyond the solemn promise made at the outbreak of war that Dutch territory would be respected by every belligerent provided that the other camp did not transgress it. Belgium, on the other hand, when she proclaimed her policy of sovereign independence in 1936, made it quite clear that this independence left Belgium sole judge of the attitude she was to adopt in the event of war. Britain and France, and shortly afterwards Germany, formally acknowledged this status by means of written guarantees. At the outbreak of war, Belgium stated that she had chosen to be neutral, but this choice by no means implies that Belgian neutrality in the present conflict is static. On the contrary, Belgian leaders have never overlooked the possibility that the vital interests of Belgium may sooner or later force Belgium to adopt a different attitude. The November alarm which was sounded when it was believed that Germany aimed at the establishment of naval and air bases on the Dutch coast, was the first of these possibilities. It is obvious that, should the German Command be master of the mouth of the Scheldt, the vital interests of Belgium would be at stake. In view of her neutral status, Holland refuses to enter into a military alliance with Belgium, but Belgium feels entitled either to go to Holland's help if threatened, or to give a sovereign interpretation to Article 16 of the

Covenant and allow the Allies free passage to rush to the help of the Dutch.”<sup>1</sup>

In brief, the danger of German invasion of the Low Countries, though never demonstrably immediate, was always present, and always real.

The diplomatic and territorial situation in South-Eastern Europe remained at the end of the second quarter as it had been at the end of the first: the “Haves,” Romania and Yugoslavia, yet had; Greece and Turkey, without excluding reciprocal adjustments within the two groups, strove to postpone such until they could be made by peaceful negotiation between (and for the direct benefit of) those immediately affected and not by way of menace or of *bakshish* from powerful and prehensile neighbours. Of these, Italy, her Empire now swelled to comprise Albania, was recognized both within and without the Balkans to have special economic interests therein which, developed as interests not necessarily exclusive of others (rather than exploited as ambitions), might prove also to the general advantage of the Inner Near East. About no German drive—commercial, industrial or diplomatic could there be any such illusion. The *Drang nach Osten* was indeed no longer trumpeted, but it had been replaced by the even more sinister *Lebensraum*, a

Balkan  
and Da  
bian  
Powers

word of fear

Unpleasing in a neighbour's ear.

*Lebensraum* could, and recently had quickly become, according to needs announceable later, a *Protektorat* or *Reichsgebiet*; and the most ardent “Have-not” could not but remember the price which Poland had ultimately paid for the recovery from Czecho-Slovakia of the coal-fields of Teschen. The Russian ogre was floundering deeper and deeper in the heroic snows of Finland, respiting his alternative southern victims, and affording them not only

<sup>1</sup> Mlle. Betty Barzin, *The Fortnightly Review*, February, 1940.

encouragement but time to strengthen their defences and even, had they the vision, to take counsel together while there yet was time. Besides, even should he threaten to lumber southward, there was still hope that an unofficial voice might murmur privately from the surviving anti-Comintern end of the Axis :

“Ci penso io”—“I’ll tekare of that.”

On the other hand there were rumours that, should Germany advance upon Yugoslavia, Italy would immediately “have to” occupy the Dalmation Coast (or she would lose the Adriatic) ; and that Russia would likewise “be forced” to occupy the Romanian and Bulgarian Black Sea ports, for her ultimate “control” of the Dardanelles. Alternatively, it was rumoured that Germany, Russia and Italy had agreed upon a “partition of interest-spheres” comprising not only the Balkans, but also the Near and Middle East.

#### Hungary

Throughout this period the Magyars were moved to profoundest sympathy for their kinsmen of Finland. Their Press emphasized the moral embargo imposed upon Russia by the United States, and the Italian attacks on Russian ruthlessness ; and it clung, almost pathetically, to German disclaimers of any responsibility therefor. Their double abhorrence of Communism and of Panslavism quickened the general resentment at the allied recognition of the Czechoslovak—“not even Czecho-slovak”—National Committee which the strongly Germanophil *Pester Lloyd* described as “an effort hard to explain politically.” Feelers of friendship were extended, not unsuccessfully, to Yugoslavia, but with Romania relations seemed not to improve. This tendency was deepened by the unconciliatory utterances of the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Czaky, which were in sharp contrast with those of his statesmanlike Premier Count Paul Teleki, and were indeed suspected in Budapest as well as in Bucharest as

being encouraged by Berlin with the object of keeping the Danubian and Balkan States asunder. Others ascribed them partly to ill-health, and partly to a desire to confirm a waning home influence by showing strength abroad. Coolly balanced critics of such official aberrations were apt to forget that the Hungarian Government had, after all, twice refused the Germans permission to march through Hungary to Poland, besides rejecting a tempting offer of the Galician oilfields ; also (a reminder of wider application), that perfect abstract neutrality is all very well the other side of the Atlantic, but with Germany or Russia immediately over the frontier, a very different thing. *Dans ces jours la diplomacie c'est l'acrobatie.*

Hungary had, after all, never adhered to the Axis, but was "following an Axis policy"—particularly a South Axis policy ; strong in the support or countenance of which she had even dared to "jump" Ruthenia, only informing the German Minister half an hour before racing German troops into the country (and shooting a few in the process). She was moreover still incensed by the German "Protektorat" over Slovakia and the absence of any mention of the Burgenland in the general scheme of revision. Even the Army was now anti-German. The Government was still unable to recover 13,000 of its railway trucks from the Reich, and had to fight hard against Nazi depreciation of the *Pengo*.

During the months of December, 1939, and January <sup>Romania</sup> and February, 1940, the efforts of Romania on the Home Front were concentrated on the building up of the defence lines along all her frontiers,<sup>1</sup> and the acquisition from abroad of armaments and ammunition. Internally, no efforts were spared to maintain and extend a political and spiritual unity.

Molotov's speech and his outspoken references to

<sup>1</sup> See Romania, *The First Quarter*, pp. 107-9.

Bessarabia met with favourable comment by the Romanian Press, though unofficially a great deal of displeasure was felt at the restatement of the Soviet's claims on that Romanian territory. No less displeasure was caused by Molotov's revival of the case of the disappearance from Bucharest of the Soviet diplomatist Butenko, with the implication that Moscow even now believes that Butenko has been murdered in Romania though it was proved at the time of his disappearance that he voluntarily went to Italy—where the Italian Press “splashed” his repudiation of the Soviet régime. The Finnish war greatly encouraged the Romanians in the belief that they could resist a Russian attack. The foreign Press meanwhile “featured” the so-called King Carol's Dyke so that the general impression was that Romania had merely dug a huge ditch. In fact, the Romanian defence line is in its way as complete as the Maginot, Siegfried, or Mannerheim Lines, consisting of all the modern elements of defence, from barbed wire, trenches, tank traps, concrete pill boxes and underground gun emplacements. Both the army on duty on the frontiers as well as a large number of civilians were working on the defence line, and these winter months with temperatures far below zero rendered the task something of a heroic effort. Relief measures were applied to help families of the men called to the Colours or used as workers on the defence line.

The foreign Press gave a great deal of publicity to the speech which King Carol delivered at Epiphany in Bessarabia. They had somehow failed to report similar speeches, no less strong in tone, delivered on Christmas Day in Transylvania and on New Year's Day in Dobruja. The key-note of all three speeches was: Romania has no ambitions beyond her own territories. She wishes to keep what she has, and consequently will fight anyone and everyone who may attempt to infringe Romania's liberty.

and territorial integrity. The recent rapprochement with Sofia was made on economic grounds, taking into consideration that the trade balance was against Bulgaria and heavily in favour of Romania.

The Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Monsieur Gafencu, studiously avoided answering in kind the violent and almost offensive attacks of Count Czaky. It was evident that even in the face of provocation Romania was striving to avoid the entanglements of a dangerous controversy which might lead to grave consequences. It was felt in Romania that Budapest resented the rapprochement between Bucharest and Rome. The visit to Italy of the leader of the Romanian Youth, Monsieur Sidorovici, marked a step forward by dispelling the frigid relations between Italy and Romania which characterized the period following the sanctions imposed on Italy at the time of the Abyssinian War. The Italian Trade Delegation to Romania was met in a spirit of friendly co-operation, Italy obtaining a very favourable trade accord and possibilities of buying certain commodities, including oil, from the Romanian market.

Throughout the second quarter Germany was anxious to buy anything which was available, but was faced with the handicap that she had piled up a very large debit account in favour of Romania, which she could not pay either in currency or in goods. Oil brought from Romania was paid for with armaments - Germany being the only country at the present time willing and ready to supply Romania's needs of anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft guns. How far these consignments of corn and oil balanced a German guarantee against a Russian invasion (or German protection) had not been clearly established.

The Oil Board, at first criticized in the Allied Press, was instituted, not to favour Germany or any other country, but as part of a general scheme to control and regulate

production, sale, and home consumption of certain products. Similar Boards were to be created soon for the control of wheat, lumber and foodstuffs.

Immediately following the assassination of Calinescu, the members of the Iron Guard began daily to disassociate themselves with that organization and pledge their loyalty to the Throne and the Government. The last group made a public demand for the right to join the rest of the nation in the constructive work now carried on. The Romanian ministerial decree acknowledging their demand was construed in some quarters into a revival of the Iron Guard "with honours and compensations," with a return on equal footing and on their own terms, to share in the conduct of the Government's affairs. It may be that the Iron Guard still maintained a "rump" in Germany or gaol. But having clamoured all these years for non-party national uniformity, which they now saw established by the King, they could not logically keep out of it.

Yugo-  
slavia

In January Prince Paul, Regent of Yugoslavia, had journeyed with his Consort to Zagreb, the capital of the Northern, Roman Catholic and therefore "Western"-looking portion of the united enlarged post-War Serbia. He had granted to the Croats that administrative home rule which, ever since their union with Serbia, the Croats had never ceased to demand; had been welcomed and thanked with almost tearful acclamation; and had returned to Belgrade where he had forestalled acrimonious criticism of his politic farsightedness by dissolving Parliament. There had been on the part of the Serbs a certain measure of disillusion: from the Bosnians (many of whom are Moslems) and from the Slovenes came claims that they too should be accorded their due shares of autonomy. Nevertheless, from the external aspect the nation was immensely strengthened by Prince Paul's momentous decision, and, if supported by Italy as well as by the Allies, should

be in a position to maintain a relatively decided (if deferential) front to the joint or alternative pressures of Nazism and Bolshevism

The Russo-German Alliance and Russia's treatment of Poland upset the youth of Yugoslavia. Some indeed of the students had seemed prepared to swallow even this first *volte-face* from the great Slav brother, but the invasion of Finland and Russia's utter indifference to the uprooting of Slav culture in Czecho-Slovakia and Poland brought about a sharp revulsion of feeling. There was "intense indignation throughout the country at the closing of Prague University and the shooting of Czech students by the Gestapo. The fact that the censorship has been afraid to allow publication of the facts is a measure of the terrorism exercised by the German propaganda in all the lesser neutral countries, but the extent to which those facts are known, in spite of this, is a measure of the failure of that propaganda to convince or to win over. There were hostile demonstrations on the occasion of the German Philharmonic concert in Belgrade, and stink bombs were thrown in the hall amid shouts for Prague and Poland."<sup>1</sup>

Something approaching a Gestapostal censorship was tolerated in the northern districts of the country, where it was moreover unadvisable for persons "wanted" by Nazis to wander within ten miles of the frontier, or to charter motor-cars with politically unknown chauffeurs. Late in February the secret police discovered a German Gestapo centre in Slovenia, generously provided with false dollar notes.

The sudden resignation of the Bulgarian Prime Minister, M. Kiossévanoff, so soon after his satisfactory conversations with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, came as a shock to the Balkans, upon whom the tendency

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Foreign Affairs*, November and December, 1939.



of Bulgaria to suspend all claims until the end of the war had been noted with relief and encouragement. Nor was the shock diminished by the personality of his successor, M Philoff, who had been educated in Germany and was therefore assumed (perhaps not over logically) to have German sympathies. These apprehensions were, however, speedily allayed, and it soon became apparent that King Boris, doubtless not without long and anxious consideration, had come down on the side of Balkan independence and unity, and would therefore not lend his country to the ambitions or strategies of any of the three Great Powers who, it was known, had hoped to avail themselves, for their own purposes, of Balkan and particularly of Bulgarian dissensions and rivalries. The rather unsatisfactory erection of a 9,000-ton foreign oil container in the Black Sea port of Varna was explained as being a private enterprise upon whose activities the Bulgarian Government would maintain close observation. Relations with Yugoslavia tended constantly to improve.

The true reason for M Kiossévanoff's retirement seems to have been that as a successful beneficent autocrat he had been unwilling to face the result of an election, in anticipation of which he had consequently resigned. When, however, the elected Parliament proved not unreasonable he might, but for ill-health, have withdrawn his resignation. By this time other plans had been made, it was rumoured that M Philoff would ultimately be succeeded by M Bagrianoff who, as Minister of Agriculture, had done much by the introduction of tractors and the encouragement of co-operative societies to advance the staple industry of Bulgaria.

Meanwhile the brief bursts of popular enthusiasm for Russia were dying down, and although there was a tendency of the General Staff to think German, the King and his Ministers were genuinely neutral, and determined

to open immediate fire upon any infraction of Bulgarian territory

Greece remained one of the few happy countries which Greece during the months of December, January and February may be said to have had no history. Tension on the Albanian frontier had been reduced by mutual withdrawals of troops, and it was generally recognized that if Greece were attacked by any power both Great Britain and Turkey would defend her. Democratic Hellenes appeared to have accepted their Dictator with a sort of cynical prudence, as anyhow an improvement upon the weakness engendered by old party bickerings. Their sentiments remained strongly pro-Ally.

The political situation of Turkey throughout the period Turkey under review was clear, logical and satisfactory. She neither advanced nor could admit (or even incur) any territorial claims, and though (as observed in Vol I of this Record) she would have preferred to see the Italians out of the Dodecanese, she did not affect to regard the Islands as *terra irredenta* and cherished no particular desire to recover them for herself. Of Italy indeed she continued to remain suspicious, but seemed increasingly prepared to co-operate with her on a basis of Balkan understanding, not least because of her growing fears of German south-eastern expansion. Meanwhile Germany continued to do "everything possible by means of intrigues in the Press and diplomatic manoeuvres in Ankara to break or weaken Turkey's association with the Allies and to involve her in difficulties with the Soviets. These efforts met with no success, but had the effect of making the German Ambassador at Ankara, Herr von Papen, *persona non grata* with the Turkish Government.

"Incidents occurred which seriously threatened to complicate diplomatic relations between Turkey and Germany. Foremost among these was the violent Ger-

man Press campaign against Turkey, instigated by the German official news agency, D N B, which accused the Turkish Press of making serious efforts to prejudice Russo-German friendship by the spreading of false news. Then Berlin was responsible for the propagation of reports that, after the termination of the Finnish campaign, Russia would annex Bessarabia and invade eastern Turkey on her way to India. No very serious attention was paid to the forecast that the Soviets would invade Turkey. But anger knew no bounds when Reich wireless stations repeatedly broadcast the news that Turkish and Russian troops were being concentrated on the Caucasian frontier. These exaggerated statements and completely untrue reports aroused the greatest indignation among the Press, official circles and the general public, and provoked certain Turkish newspapers to reveal the insidious activities of German propaganda agents in Istanbul. Attempts of German agents to corrupt organs of the Turkish Press were exposed with written proofs, and these disclosures eventually led to investigations being made by the Special Branch of the police. Police raided the office in Istanbul of the German newspaper *Türkische Post* and seized quantities of pamphlets which had been printed there, under orders from the German Embassy, for distribution in Turkey. German banks and commercial houses were found to be implicated in the attempts at corruption and there was an outcry for their closing."<sup>1</sup>

In February streams of German citizens giving themselves out to be merchants representing German business houses journeyed through the Balkans on their way to Iran and Arabia. They were believed to be German officers. Others were mysteriously travelling to Turkey, and this when genuine German business men had been

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Foreign Affairs*, November and December, 1939

continuously leaving Turkey, and when German experts, suspected of the intention of smuggling through the Straits the two Turkish submarines they were building at Istanbul, were being actually expelled

The Turks had indeed no fear of the Germans, respect rather for their military qualities, though less for their manners—and less still for the quality of some of the war material they had recently supplied

With Russia Turkey grew more reserved though still genuinely anxious to remain friends, despite nightly Soviet wireless attacks. There seems cause for belief that she would have actively assisted Rumania in repelling a Russian invasion. The conversations between M. Menemencioğlu, General Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Office and the Bulgarian Government, proceeded to such good effect that the two countries decided in January to withdraw their troops from their common frontiers. More positive hopes were cherished when M. Menemencioğlu was able to assure the public that there was "a complete identity of views between the two countries on all subjects discussed." He furthermore announced that as a result of his visits to London and Paris, Turkey had obtained a credit of £43,500,000 and that Britain and France had agreed to buy £10,000,000 worth of Turkish produce annually.

These various happy developments were, however, tragically offset by a series of earthquakes equalling if not exceeding in severity those recorded in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Beginning at dead of night on December 27, they destroyed towns and villages over a large area of Eastern and Northern Anatolia, and they continued intermittently throughout the dark and bitter winter months. Twelve towns with populations of over 15,000 and numerous villages were completely razed. The centre of the shocks was Erzinjan,

capital of the lofty snowbound plateaux of Anatolia, and there 10,000 people lost their lives, while all those who survived were left homeless. Many of those who escaped the immediate result of the quakes perished from exposure without food and clothing in temperatures of about 25 degrees below zero. On December 31 rivers began to overflow and floods were widespread in Western Anatolia for more than a week. On January 11 it was made known that over 23,000 people had been killed, 8,000 injured, and that 30,000 houses had been destroyed. Immediately after the first quake the whole Turkish nation was mobilized for relief work under the command of General Orbay. Hospital and casualty trains were rushed to the devastated areas, and aeroplanes carried food and clothing to districts inaccessible by road and rail. The remarkably efficient and courageous manner in which every section of the community responded to the fearful demands made upon it excited the admiration of the whole world. Observers on the spot contrasted the eager unsparing activities of the modern *Yeni Turk* Valis, the administrators, with the supine and selfish aloofness of the corrupt (but happily extinct) Ottoman Pashas. The British and French Governments immediately gave some £50,000 towards the cost of relief and sums of money were also received from the American Red Cross, the Soviet Government, Romania and the Shah of Iran. Material aid came from Britain, France, Greece, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and India.

In Great Britain there was formed an Anglo-Turkish Relief Committee (of which the author had the honour of being a member) under the Presidency of Lord Lloyd and with Sir George Clerk, an ex-Ambassador at Ankara, as Chairman. Within a few weeks cargoes of clothing, boots, shoes and medical supplies were on the high seas speeding towards Turkish ports. The more urgent

requirements were sent out by rail. The material asked for and supplied including such diverse objects as sewing-machines, soap and galvanized iron. When in the middle of February a violent shock destroyed a village in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea, new loads of warm clothing and medicines arrived at the scene within twenty-four hours of the disaster.

The full tale of deaths could not be known for some time, and it required little imagination to picture the terrible sufferings of the survivors. Much of the country affected was "higher than the tops of Snowdon. Hundreds of towns and villages lie far from the railway track, up long valleys or upon rugged mountain sides, while abnormal conditions, blizzards and snowdrifts, floods and tempests, all conspire to hamper the work of rescue and relief, notwithstanding the heroic efforts that are being made."<sup>1</sup> The unflinching, uncomplaining heroism of the sufferers though it roused the admiration of all, was no surprise to those who knew the spirit of Turkey. It is exemplified with a noble restraint worthy of classical antiquity, in the letter received by an English resident of Ankara from his servant who had hastened back to his village in the stricken area as soon as the news of the first tremors was received.

"I start by presenting my homage and respect. Concerning my private affairs I have to tell you that on arrival at my destination I stood before the desolation of my village razed to the ground. No two stones stand together where once stood our village. I cannot speak of my misfortune but knowing of your benign interest I will tell you a little of it. All but one of my family closed their eyes upon this world under the ruins of our house, and she who remains to me is a daughter of eighteen months. We live in the snow. Before I return to you I must find her a home. This will take some time. I

<sup>1</sup> From the Appeal, *The Times*, January 11, 1940

hope to receive your permission to absent myself for this is the moment to extend to me the promised hand of help. From the desolation of my village, I have the honour to present this short letter to you. I await your answer 'with four eyes' and respect.—Cemal."

#### Spain

Spain continued to maintain a neutrality hostile to Russia and therefore wholly disenchanted with Germany, suspicious of the Allies and closer than ever to her non-belligerent "favourite sister" Italy. She authorized the sending of war material to Finland. The Spanish Press, under strict Government control, abounded nevertheless in German propaganda, though there were occasional not unsympathetic references to Allied successes. On the whole the country remained in the grip of the Falange, under the leadership of Señor Sunir, the avowed representative of totalitarian Axis policy. The considerable popular opposition to this attitude was unambiguously handled by General Franco in his New Year's broadcast to the nation :

"We must stop insult and calumnies and put an end to the covered propaganda emanating from cowards and mean-spirited people who mix with traitors. We must stop the systematic campaign which goes on in cafés and other whispering galleries where our hidden enemies gather. Spaniards, be on your guard against all open or concealed enemies ! We must not despise those enemies however unimportant they may appear. All those small groups meeting in dissipated and crapulous places carry on a campaign as devastating as the 'Red' one itself. It is not enough to leave the matter by despising their campaign. We must face with energy and faith all those realities and their consequences. With faith and the necessary efforts we should overcome the maledictions of the cowards and mean-spirited."

Despite the assurance of Señor Sunir that "we are no tyrant, but a Christian king," and that the people would

not cease to enjoy their constitutional and legal rights, political "purification" did not cease either, and the papers printed daily long lists of persons summoned before the tribunals, though rarely the sentences they received. These tribunals indeed, according to *The Times*, January 3, 1940

"have to struggle to keep pace with arrests. Denunciation is extended to foreigners, as in the case of Mr. Charles Clayton Ray, president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Madrid, who has been twice molested. Association with the 'Red' Governments or authorities, even in an official capacity, is confounded with criminality. Generally, it is found impossible to attribute one atom of patriotism or honesty to the other side or anyone connected with it, or to make a distinction between criminals and political adversaries. This was also the case on the Republican side during the war. Vindictiveness is carried into peace. In spite of promises to the contrary persecution for political reasons continues, and heavy sentences are pronounced. Fifty Basque priests still lie in prison. Two of them were recently reprieved from death by General Franco, but the mayors of Tudela and Eibar, together with the youth Raimundo Uriarte, leader of the Basque *mendigoxales* (Alpinists), were shot."

The economic situation was bad, food was short, for lack of cultivation during the war. These and other deficiencies rendered Spain an eager purchaser and therefore exporter, sorely needing the currency coming from foreign trade. France took the lead, not only in concluding a trade agreement, but also in capturing the market previously exploited by Germany.

At the end of February Lord Lloyd, after a visit to Madrid, proposed to General Franco the extension of British Council activities in Spain, parallel with the recently opened Italian Institute, the admirable French Lycée, and the various German institutions in Madrid,



which the General was understood to have welcomed.

Italy

Italy did not cease to maintain her watching brief of critical, armed "non-belligerency," the key to which was provided by the *parola rivelatrice* pronouncement of Count Ciano on December 16. This was the first major neutral document of the war, and will long continue to deserve careful if critical study. The speech followed up and developed the December 7 declarations of the Fascist Grand Council, which stated that :

"The immediate precedents of the war, the character of static siege assumed by the war on the Western Front, and its developments, more particularly in the economic field by means of the blockade and counter-blockade, the changes which have taken place in the territorial situation and in the relation of forces from the Baltic to the Carpathians, fully justify the decision taken by the Cabinet on September 1, establishing Italy's non-belligerency."

Further, the Grand Council, in view of the "tendencious reports of foreign origin," declared that

"The relations between Italy and Germany remain as they were fixed by the Treaty of Alliance, and by exchanges of views that preceded and followed it at Milan, Salzburg, and Berlin."

With regard to the Balkans,

"everything which may happen in the Danubian basin and the Balkans cannot fail to interest Italy directly in view of her common land and maritime frontier, increased since the union of Albania to Italy."<sup>1</sup>

Count Ciano had two main objects, to prove *urbi et orbi* that Italy had not deserted the Axis, and to set forth and justify Italian policy for the past twenty years. With regard to the first, he achieved a conspicuous success. For the completion of their respective military prepara-

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Foreign Affairs*, November and December, 1939, p. 668.

tions, Italy had required three, Germany four or five years, until the end of which period "the Government of the Reich concurred with us on the opportuneness of not raising any question likely to provoke fresh polemics" Upon this understanding had been founded the crystallization of the Axis (whose basis had always been anti-Comintern) into the Alliance of May 22, and it clearly implied that Italy never undertook to give military support to Germany if she declared war upon Poland Nevertheless, Count Ciano had made a final effort for a German-Polish peace by negotiation, journeying to Salzburg in mid-August, but countered (throughout the 11th, 12th, and 13th) by long-winded

"reasons for which Germany could no longer afford to face the delays and postponements of diplomatic negotiations conducted by an adversary who had given proofs of bad will towards a fair solution"

The Count would appear, by quoting without comment, to endorse the Nazi thesis that any hesitation of a weaker (or democratic) Government to sign ("on the dotted line") the proposals of a totalitarian State is equivalent to "proofs of bad will towards a fair solution"

"For our part, we did not fail from that moment to intimate to the Government of the Reich the reasons—already well known to them—for which the Fascist Government would have preferred a peaceful solution of the dispute, or at least, failing that, a strict localization of the conflict"<sup>1</sup>

But he had found that Hitler and Ribbentrop, having gone too far to withdraw without loss of face, had decided upon war He was, moreover, given a hint that the Russo-German commercial negotiations might develop further, but of this he had no further intimation until 10 p m on August 21, when he learnt on the telephone

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, January 1, 1940

that Ribbentrop would sign the Russo-German pact of non-aggression on August 23. The account of this cavalier treatment, supplementing certain personal details which had leaked through of Ribbentrop's reception of Count Ciano at Salzburg, came as a cold douche to the deputies. It was presented with masterly detachment which, logically pursued, might well have justified not only "non-belligerency," but genuine and complete neutrality.<sup>1</sup> But the argument was not so pursued, and, indeed, the other half of the speech might have been pronounced by Ribbentrop himself, notably in the oft-cited doctrine of "reality."

"Germany announced to the world directly, and not through Italian channels, that the war with Poland was at an end, and that she had no reason for continuing, or rather, for beginning, a war on a large scale against the Western Powers. The hope of peace appeared once more on the horizon. But these hopes were of short duration. They vanished when the democracies made known their war aims.

"Germany, victorious in her eastern war, and who, in the east, had come to an agreement of vast import with Russia that concerned not only Poland, but modified the entire situation in the Baltic States, thus Germany was informed that it was not only a question of Poland, but also of Czechoslovakia and Austria.

"There was obviously nothing to be done. It is evident that even if Germany were ready to examine the question of the creation of a national Polish State, she could not admit the indictment of the Nazi policy, or go back on the concrete successes secured by this policy in past years.

"Those who wish to make a fruitful contribution to peace *must base their efforts upon reality*,<sup>2</sup> and continue on that ground, otherwise it will be no true peace that is restored to Europe, and disagreements will become more

<sup>1</sup> The speech was not allowed by the Nazis to be reproduced in their Press.

<sup>2</sup> Author's italics.

bitter, and will lead to a yet more violent, and perhaps more general, conflagration ”

In other words, Axis acquisitions dating from yesterday constitute immediate, permanent, and undebateable “reality,” which it is bourgeois, democratic, and unrealistic to dispute

*Desine fata deum flecti sperare precando* <sup>1</sup>

whereas it is only less realistic for these same democracies not to perceive that their (or smaller Powers’) frontiers and dominions, established and entitled by solemn treaties extending over decades and centuries, amount to no more than an out-of-date *status quo*, resistance to a resettlement of which, “in the interests of European civilization and legal order,” is not far removed from positive provocation. They are therefore to be constantly subject to sudden, unilateral revision by any racial or political theorist who considers himself strong enough to impose his will

the simple plan

That he should take who had the power

And he should keep who can

Italian policy, therefore, up to the end of the first half year of the war, would seem to consist of a genuine and abiding hostility towards Bolshevism—though not necessarily towards Russia, combined with the maintenance of “non-belligerency”—a peace of high-tension uncertainty as to her purposes, almost amounting to that undeclared war waged by Hitler ever since his seizure of power, against all who stood, or might stand, between him and his ambitions. This attitude of the Fascist Government was exemplified in an address pronounced by Signor Muti to a group of party federal secretaries on January 17, by which time Italian public opinion was so

<sup>1</sup> Hope not to alter destiny by prayer

openly pro-Finn and anti-German that foreigners seemed to be drawing therefrom unwarrantably optimistic inferences

"Let no one lull himself in the illusion that the present situation of Italy towards the war will last for ever. Fascist Italy may find herself under the necessity and duty of taking up arms. She must, therefore, be ready materially, and, above all, morally. It should be added that it is absurd and dangerous to look with complacency upon certain too-recent demonstrations of international sympathy without justification or foundation, which do not correspond to the real sentiments of the Italian people that has learned not to forget the history which, especially in recent times, Italy has so dramatically lived."<sup>1</sup>

It was remarked that in this harangue democracy was accorded pride of place over bourgeoisie and Bolshevism, the other two villains in the drama of modern Europe. The military preparedness of Italy was, indeed, constantly on the increase, particularly in the domain of the air, where she had in the past four years sunk from first to fourth or even fifth among the Powers, outranked both in planes and in engines by England, the United States, Germany, and France. This decline was partly compensated by her immense reserve of skilled pilots, of whom many hundreds have had the advantage of practical (if somewhat one-sided) experience in Ethiopia and Spain. Her artillery also was undergoing a thorough re-equipment, notably in anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. At the beginning of December there were some 868,000 men with the colours, a force considered "more than sufficient for any eventuality, considering the season, the defensive system now completed in Libya, and the abundant snowfalls on the Alps." This last item was interpreted by some military critics as a rebuttal of military weaknesses such as uncompleted defences in the

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Foreign Affairs*, January and February, 1940, pp. 59-60

north By the beginning of March there may have been slightly fewer By January, the continued rise in prices had necessitated a general standardization of clothes, including cloth, suits, stockings, shoes, underwear, and household linen The measure was welcomed in the Press, and endured by the public as yet another proof of the preparedness for war

With regard to the future relations of the Balkan States, Count Ciano's speech was significant, rather than convincing or reassuring

"The Balkan peninsula has been mentioned several times, and Italian policy is directed towards that quarter for reasons to be found in geography, history, and tradition—not to speak of the fact that Italy, by her union with Albania, has now become a Balkan Power I should therefore like to add that, while Italy reaffirms a sincere desire to see order and peace maintained and strengthened in the Danubian and Balkan regions of Europe, she does not consider that the constitution of a block of any kind can be profitable to the countries which compose it, or serve those higher aims which have as their object the speedy re-establishment of peace "

No reason was adduced for this thesis, which might well be countered "to avouch this, is no proof" It might conceivably apply to the formation of a specifically Slav group under Russia The formula has an oddly traditional tang of that old Roman *Divide et impera*, so often and so unjustly imputed to the British Empire

On the face of it, the six Balkan-Danubian Powers would appear to have everything to gain by voluntary mutual adjustments, and by the formation of a bloc strong enough to choose its own markets, customers, and terms of exchange, though it may well be believed that there are neighbouring Powers to whom "the constitution of a bloc of any kind cannot be profitable" Certainly, the Allies, who have no political or territorial aspirations in South-

Eastern Europe, would welcome the formation of just such an understanding—and for the reasons given, and it says much for the *navet  * of the Italian Press, or the docility of its public, that the Allied encouragement of Balkan union could be ascribed to their desire to bring the Balkan Powers into the war. This view reappeared immediately after the Belgrade Balkan Congress in a statement entitled “Hungary’s Standpoint,” published by the Hungarian Government in the *Pester Lloyd*, in which it was declared that Hungary had always been opposed to the formation of a bloc in South-Eastern Europe because “it could easily arouse the distrust of a Great Power”

Italy’s interest and possible intervention as a Balkan Power would therefore be restricted to the dictates of *sacro egoismo* to supporting Hungary, as represented by the non-Nazi Prime Minister, Count Paul Teleki, against Bolshevik invasion—possibly, even, against the extension of German influence favoured by Count Csaky, to restraining Hungary from disturbing the peace by immediate pressing home of her “claim” for Transylvania upon Romania—not from any sympathy for Romania, but because any such pressure would infallibly entail Bolshevik invasion of Bessarabia—against which fatal entry into the Balkans Hungary, patient towards Romania and strong in the backing of Italy, could thus confidently approve herself the bulwark. How far such an arrangement could withstand a German, or Russo-German, impact was not stated. In the phrase of the Arabic proverb “Not all that is thought is said”—still less published

Early in 1940 the official results of the transfer-option for the German inhabitants of the Southern Tirol, or Alto Adige, were published. 185,365 out of 229,500 of these Italian citizens opted for Germany, of whom some

were to be settled along the German-Italian frontier and others dispatched to Poland. Numbers of German opters had been increased by a Nazi whispering campaign that, if all voted for transfer, compensation would be so high that the Italian Government would be unable to pay it—and that they would thus be left in peace, alternatively, that the Germans would be across the Brenner in a few months—when those who had opted for Italy would be shot. From Italian sources they had gathered that opters for Italy would be transplanted to Sicily. Life had not been easy for early evacuees. Many found themselves in vacated Jesuit establishments at Innsbruck. They had been promised farms, and when they complained were forthwith put into prison.

By February the allied decision to retaliate for the wholly illegal German practice of scattering the sea with unnotified mines by controlling German exports (as well as imports) had brought about a serious deadlock with the Italian Government, particularly with regard to the proposed stopping of coal mined in Germany and carried by sea to Italy. Of the 9,000,000 tons of coal exported from the Ruhr to Italy, some 6,000,000 tons go by sea, most of which is mined by Italian workmen and is borne by Italian ships, so that, as claimed in the Italian Press, its intrinsic value was said to be less than 25 per cent of its ultimate cost, and this should exempt it from confiscation by the British. The coal was "an indispensable necessity for the life and work of the Italian people." Application of the control was postponed for several weeks, while negotiations for meeting the difficulty proceeded. Italy was offered British instead of German coal, to be exchanged in part for the goods chiefly needed by Britain. These were the products of Italian heavy industries. Quite suddenly the Italian Government departed from this position, and by the end of



February the discussions had come to a standstill, whilst an acrimonious and even menacing tone had been introduced into the Italian Press. The British Government and Press remained politely firm, and at the end of February it was mutually agreed that eighteen ships, which had been loaded to Rotterdam and accepted in good faith, should be allowed to proceed, but that there should be no more of such shipments.

Although, therefore, Italy in most respects was receiving from the British blockade such "most favoured nation treatment" as to arouse resentments in the United States, who detected a tendency to assume and to presume upon their sympathy for the allied cause, the Italian Government and Press remained critically hostile, while the Italian people, though perfectly loyal to their King and to their leader, became increasingly anti-German and anti-war. The doctrine of *sacro egoismo* must remain the first principle of all national policy its application varying in degree, but not in kind. It is therefore not necessarily cynical and must of late have aroused deep questionings in the profoundly ironical Italian spirit. What, for instance, was a serious student of his country's foreign policy to think when his Foreign Minister proclaims, on December 16, his entire acceptance of the German treatment of Poland, whereas his Prime Minister had, only a few months before, published in the *Gazeta Polska* a "Message to Poland," declaring how

"Still more admirable is the work by which in these twenty years Poland has succeeded in building a political and military structure which secures for her that position among the Great Powers to which she is entitled and that important function in the life of Europe to which she is called by her geographical position and her historical tradition. To-day it is not possible to face the problems of political equilibrium and harmony between

the European nations without the collaboration of Poland”<sup>1</sup>

For, after all, the untrammelled Italian opinion, where allowed free play (and sufficient information) is not incapable of judging men and actions on their merits, as was shown by their indignation with Russia over Finland, and with Germany for holding up Italian war material intended for the Finnish Government. Yet it had to be doubted whether such sentiments could have been expressed if Finland (or any other Scandinavian country) should have been invaded by Germany. How would she deal with other small neutrals? Would her sympathy be restricted to such as lost their independence to Russia?

The author found but few of his Italian friends proud of their official attitude, which they considered *poco signorile*, or not very gentlemanly, nor was it less wounding to lifelong admirers of Italy than it must have been galling to Italian patriots to find their policy inevitably and not unjustly classed with that of the “Jackal Neutrals.” But how otherwise could it be described? It was clear to the world, as it must have been to every reasoning Italian (even when warned by the Fascist Press of “prepared Allied attacks” upon Italy!), that his country could be in no possible danger whatever—unless cryptic significance can be read into General Field-Marshal Goring’s threat of “Hell and Inferno” from the air for all countries which opposed Germany (Hell for Nordics doubtless, but for whom could the Dante end of the phrase be intended?) What prestige could there be in having no policy save to rush in pursuit of the victor so soon as it should have become clear which he was? And what could the top end of the Axis be thinking of a partner who obviously could

<sup>1</sup> February 25, 1939

be less and less depended on in adversity, and would only join in when one had already triumphed by one's own strong arm? Immediate entry with Germany would, at least, have been logically loyal. Leadership of the European neutrals until the end of the war would have been a role not inconsonant with political as well as commercial correctness. Even a breaking with artificial pacts or shackles and a return to traditional friendships would have been more than intelligible. But history would find it difficult to take pride in this middle position, of the menacing armed non-belligerent waiting—to see which way the cat of victory would jump—the policy

*Degli angeli che non furon ribelli  
Ne fur fedeli a Dio, ma per se foro*

*A Dio spracenti, ed ai nemici sui* <sup>1</sup>

Of the angels who not rebellious proved  
Nor faithful were to God, but for themselves  
Were only

Both to God displeasing  
And to his foes

France had never possessed the friendship of Benito Mussolini. Great Britain had lost it. Had any major third party gained it? Signor Mussolini himself was becoming more inaccessible, more anti-democratic and, it was rumoured, more and more German in sentiment. One of the most obvious signs of this increasing Germanism was the continued application of the anti-Jewish laws approved in 1938 and 1939. On leap-year day, 1940, the Italian Press published a list of seventy-five lawyers and seven procurators, all of Rome, who were struck off the national register of their professions and compelled henceforth to confine their services to Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Dante, Inf III, 38

clients One hundred and thirty-one Jewish medical practitioners in Rome were similarly penalized, and the restrictions were to be extended to the provincial towns Jews were also banned from the jewellery trade throughout the country The supporters of Benito Mussolini, not only in Italy, remarked with regret his adoption of anti-Semitism, apparently at the instance or in imitation of a man whom they regarded as himself a clumsy German copy of an Italian masterpiece Count Ciano, on the other hand, was considered to be, though equally guided by *sacro egoismo*, growing more appreciative of the Allied position, and less and less inclined to tolerate Nazi domination or domineering So far, the Duce had preserved, and even enhanced, the range and accuracy of his vision Would he maintain it now? Might he not be tempted by some ephemeral but spectacular stroke of Germany to believe that the hour for Italy's "vindication" had come, and, despite the known reluctance of his people, of his Sovereign, of the Head of his Faith, to loose his long-prepared forces on the path from which there could be no returning? In the necessary propaganda campaign he would have, as compared with Goebbels, the disadvantage of operating on a quick-witted, critical public For, despite the balance and brilliance of his intellect, there were those, not only his enemies, who could not forget that this great man was also a peasant of the land from which sprang the word, and the deed—*vendetta* Could he but bide his time, keeping his keen, cool brain clear alike of ambition for prestige, emulation of his ally, and revenge for sanctions, his position and that of his country at the end of the war would be incalculably enhanced not only with both groups of belligerents but with every Power, great as well as small, in the world

When the bones of the Italian poet of freedom had

been transferred from England to Italy the British Government had received the following message :

*Alla Inghilterra  
ospitale esilio e primo sepolcro  
di Ugo Foscolo  
Il Capo del Governo Italiano  
nel centenario della morte  
del poeta d'Italia  
per riconoscimento e augurio  
di costante spirituale concordanza  
delle due Nazioni  
d d d Benito Mussolini  
Roma 12 Dicembre 1927, VI. <sup>1</sup>*

In the early spring of 1940 there was still reason to hope, though with diminishing confidence, that the traditional sentiments of the two nations were still unchanged. Meanwhile, the lonely violinist and leader of what survived of the concert of continental Europe continued to mystify the world with number after number of his Enigma Variations.

China

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, having been elected, in Plenary Session of the Kuomintang, President of the Executive Yuan, was formally inducted into office on December 11, 1940. In the same month China launched offensives in Hupeh, Hunan and Kiangvi, and recaptured strategic positions north and east of Nanning. The United States Congress passed a Bill providing for additional credits of \$20,000,000 each to the nations "now victims of aggression—China and Finland." Stalin sent a message to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek wishing China victory over "all her enemies." The Soviet Press described Mr. Wang Ching-Wei as a traitor and Japan

<sup>1</sup> To England, hospitable land of exile and first sepulchre of Ugo Foscolo, the Head of the Italian Government on the centenary of the death of the poet of Italy in gratitude and augury of constant spiritual concord between the two Nations.

was informed that the millions of dollars which she had invested in Mr Wang Ching-Wei would be lost

Meanwhile, North China was desperate with famine, millions were starving and there were serious food riots. According to Chinese accounts, the Japanese were doing their best to prevent Allied supplies of rice and other provisions from reaching the unfortunate population

Japanese plans to set up a new Federal Government for China under Mr Wang Ching-Wei suffered a severe setback when two of his former supporters published in Hong Kong on January 21 the text of an agreement alleged to have been signed by him with the Japanese on December 30 last. The agreement, which provided for China's recognition of "Manchukuo," the economic and political domination of China by Japan, and the stationing of Japanese troops and naval forces in certain areas including North China and Inner Mongolia and at points along the Chinese coast, was hotly denounced in Chungking as "the most abject and shameless document in 4,000 years of Chinese history," and "worse than the Twenty-one Demands (of 1915)." A spokesman of Mr Wang Ching-Wei, however, described the documents in question as "demands submitted by the Japanese," and denied that any Agreement had been signed with the Japanese. It seems probable that this is correct, since the documents have every appearance of being merely preliminary exchanges of views

During January and February the Japanese carried out a series of bombing attacks on the French railway from Haiphong to Yunnanfu on the Chinese side of the frontier. Considerable damage was done to the line and traffic was interrupted for more than two weeks, and no sooner had the line been repaired than a further raid inflicted over a hundred-and-fifty casualties, including five French Europeans, and resulted in the line being

broken in two places. Traffic was resumed a fortnight later. Representations were made in Tokyo by the French Government and also by the United States Government and by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. The Japanese Government declared their readiness to pay compensation for the damage suffered by French interests.

Japan

When Ribbentrop affixed his signature to Stalin's dotted line in the Kremlin on August 23, 1939, he caused (among other effects) a complete reorientation of Japanese policy, and thereby notably fortified the Allied position in the Far East. The jolt had shaken out the Hiranuma Cabinet, and its successor under General Abe, after five months' office without visible achievement save of approving a budget of 10,360,000,000 *yen* (the highest yet known in Japan, of which 64 per cent was allotted to military expenditure), was happy to hand over in January to Admiral Yonai, a former Minister of the Navy; the Ministers of War and Marine in the previous Government remaining unchanged. It was the cautiously and tentatively declared policy of the Japanese Government to maintain and even to enhance good relations with France, the British Empire and the United States. The Allies, locked in a life and death grapple with Hitlerism, had every incentive to cultivate such relations. In Japan, considerations of statesmanship, increasingly obvious to all save the extreme military section, clearly indicated the wisdom of this policy. A shortage of rice, an adverse trade balance with countries outside the Yen bloc which showed no decrease on that of the previous year and dwindling gold reserves combined to cause considerable anxiety as to the economic stability of the country. The people were enjoined to economize and to consume less, and the agricultural population urged to grow more for export. But, in point of fact, the cultiv-

able area of Japan is not capable of great expansion, while a shortage of fertilizers and of agricultural labour render it difficult even to maintain a normal output. Added to this, the inadequacy of the available supplies of tinplate seriously impeded the development of the canning industry. Besides these problems, Japan had to reckon with urgent preoccupation in China, her delicate and crucial position with the United States, and with Russia.

The Allies found an understanding to be no easy matter. At Tientsin there was no improvement in the blockade situation. Indeed, the barbed-wire fence round the Concessions was again electrified on January 28 and barrier restrictions generally tightened up. No solution had yet been found for the disposal of the 50,000,000 silver *yuan* deposited by the Chinese Nationalist Government in Chinese banks in Tientsin, and claimed for many months by the Peking Government, which the Japanese Government recognized, and supported, as the *de facto* Government of China. Britain declared that she could not hand over the silver without first obtaining the consent of Chungking and consulting the French and American Governments, who were also interested. On the currency issue, too, which centred around a Japanese demand that the Chungking Government's notes, the *fapi*, be banned from circulation inside the British Concession, the negotiators were likewise unable to come to any agreement, and the talks had to be abandoned. Exchanges of views on a somewhat less formal basis continued between the two Governments throughout the succeeding months, and by the end of December a certain amount of progress appeared to have been made. It was still necessary, however, from the British point of view, to obtain Chungking's assent to any formula that might be worked out between London and Tokyo. Early



in January the British Ambassador to China, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, journeyed to the Chinese capital to discuss the matter with Nationalist officials, and there followed a period of arduous triangular negotiations. Such negotiations were bound to be slow and difficult, but at the end of February, when the second quarter of the European War came to a close, both London and Tokyo were hopeful that a solution satisfactory to both, as well as taking into account the desires of the Chungking Government, would soon be reached.

In Shanghai, the great nerve centre of British business enterprise in the Far East, something approaching a *modus vivendi* was being established. In December, Japan announced its intention to reopen the Lower Yangtze as well as the Pearl River to general navigation. Preparations for this were said to have begun at once, but the actual reopening had, by the end of February, not yet been effected though it was expected to take place in the next few months.

While the Chinese campaign was continually proclaimed to be going well, all that the outside world knew was that it was certainly going on. A hopeful tendency became manifest towards the end of February, when it was rumoured that the Japanese Government, including the responsible leaders of the Army, had come to think of Wang, not as a final solution of the China problem, but rather as a possible bridge to peace with the Chungking Government.

The American Trade Treaty with Japan lapsed on January 26. Both sides took steps to ensure that the trade position should remain unchanged after the date of expiry, but trade relations between the two countries are now on a day-to-day basis and can be altered without notice. The situation has caused both anxiety and irritation in Japan, but America was not disposed to

negotiate a new treaty until her grievances in China were redressed, while Japan could not well redress the total of these grievances unless she was prepared to define more precisely her aims in China with regard to foreign interests. Tokyo, therefore, began to negotiate with various South American countries for trade pacts and for commodities hitherto bought from the United States. Meanwhile, the deadlock continued without any sign on the part of America that she was prepared to end it. A number of Resolutions were before the United States Senate for the purpose of imposing an embargo on Japan, but their consideration was postponed, and it seemed improbable that measures of a controversial nature would be sponsored by either side in Congress. Relations between Japan and the United States, nevertheless, remained uneasy, though it seemed unlikely that either side would take action which would render them critical.

Relations with the Soviet Government, in spite of numerous theories (and German hopes) to the contrary, steadily deteriorated. Wishful thinkers forgot that Japan's enmity for Communism is no mere political expedient but a firm and fundamental principle on which her national life is based, and that Soviet policy on the Asiatic Continent, far from differing from that of the Tsars, is inspired by exactly the same motives of imperialistic expansion. On September 9 General Abe had referred to Herr von Rippentrop's suggestion for a Soviet-Japanese Pact in the following scornful terms: "The German Foreign Minister distinguishes the Comintern from the Soviet Government and emphasizes the possibility of distinguishing a Russo-Japanese non-aggression pact from the Anti-Comintern Pact. Such remarks are questionable and run counter to the intention of Japan." The negotiations which were opened between Japan and Russia toward the close of last year

failed, with the exception of the accord on the fisheries, to achieve any substantial results. The Commission set up to demarcate the Manchukuo-Mongolian boundary held sixteen meetings in December and January but finally disbanded without having reached agreement. The trade talks inaugurated in Moscow in December still appeared, at the end of February, to have made no progress. Soviet enthusiasm for the negotiations, indeed, seemed in Tokyo to vary with the fortunes of the Finnish campaign, just as the Nomonhan truce in September appeared to have been inspired by Moscow's desire to smooth over the situation on Russia's Far Eastern border in order to pave the way for the aggression against Poland.

These truths were not forgotten in Tokyo, where military circles had long predicted the inevitability of a second Russo-Japanese War. There were few, indeed, who doubted that once Russia had secured her ill-gotten gains in the Baltic—and possibly later in the Balkans—she would again turn her attention to the Far East. Japan also knew that, when this day arrived, a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact would be as valueless as the paper on which it was written.

The Allied public had been disappointed at Japan's failure to place blame on Germany for her sinking of the *Terukuni Maru*, they were downright astounded when, in mid-January, the Japanese Government made a major international incident of the stopping by a British warship, some forty odd miles off the Japanese coast, of the trans-Pacific liner *Asama Maru*, from which twenty-one Germans of military age were taken off. The Japanese Press, anxious for headlines, took up the cudgels against Britain with fiery zeal, and in Parliament every opponent of the newly installed Yonai Government sought to embarrass it by demands for stronger and more forceful action. But these facts alone do not

suffice to explain the unexpectedly grave proportions which the incident assumed in Japanese eyes. There *was* a large amount of genuine resentment at what the average Japanese man-in-the-street considered an act of high-handedness. From the beginning he had never given one thought to the legal aspects of the case, nor did he waste any sympathy on the arrested Germans. What angered him was the fact that a British man-of-war had dared to venture beneath "the very shadow of Mt. Fuji," and there fire a shot across the bows of a ship flying the Japanese flag.

Indeed, unintentional as this injury to Japanese feelings was, the affair did present its unfortunate aspects. In an exchange of Notes, both Great Britain and Japan maintained their point of view. It is to the credit of Britain that, in deference to the Japanese sentiment, an effort was made to patch the matter up by the surrender of nine of the Germans, while the Japanese Government likewise showed its desire to avoid further unpleasantness by instructing Japanese shipping companies no longer to accept as passengers nationals of either belligerents except upon proof that they were not liable to military service.<sup>1</sup>

Far more serious in terms of pounds, shillings and pence was the effect on Japanese trade and industry of the Allied blockade measures against Germany. Not only was the flow of Japanese seaborne goods to the Reich cut off by the control of German imports, but more important still, the Order-in-Council of November 27, which extended the blockade to German exports, interfered with the delivery to Japan of vitally needed machinery ordered and paid for before the outbreak of war, under a long-term trading contract, and led to

<sup>1</sup> Japan still claims the surrender of the remaining nineteen Germans but in fact the question has ceased to be of diplomatic interest.

strong protests being made to the British Government by the Japanese Government on the grounds that the nature of the reprisal was contrary to International Law.<sup>1</sup> Finally, wartime restrictions on the export of vital raw materials from the Dominions, notably Australia and India, had a harsh effect on Japanese industry. Here, too, however, a spirit of accommodation was shown on both sides, and in the three months of the second quarter trade questions were dealt with between the British and Japanese Governments as they arose, by friendly negotiation.

#### America

The relations of the Allies with the United States, though sometimes uneasy, were never difficult, despite the vexations of a great war from which even the greatest of neutrals cannot claim exemption. Contraband problems became both less and more acute. The increasing acceptance of Navicerts had notably relieved the tension of long irritating delays. By mid-February the first United States ship carrying a cargo entirely covered by Navicerts had passed through the British Contraband Control. It was bound for the Mediterranean with a mixed cargo, including phosphate for Italy and 786 mules for Turkey. Because the owners of this vessel had arranged for her cargo to be fully covered by Navicerts, she was delayed only two and a half hours. By mid-November, applications for Navicerts were being received at the rate of about 2,000 a week.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the scrutiny of American air-borne mails at Bermuda incensed United States' opinion as being an over-subtle interpretation—even a violation—of the Hague Convention of 1907, which they asserted

<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Foreign Office issued a statement on November 25 declaring that the blockade of German exports constituted a violation of neutral rights, and a protest along the same lines was lodged with the British Ambassador in Tokyo on November 30th.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, November 15, 1940

established the inviolability of the sealed-letter mail of neutral countries which was not proceeding directly to belligerent ports. Americans considered, not without justice, that they had "gone easy" with the Allies over contraband exigencies, and this extension of the theory aroused correspondingly acute resentment, though it was admitted by the more impartial that it was vital for the Allies to cut off the stream of wealth, in cash and gems, which Nazi agents in the States were directing to Germany. By February leading American journals were recording that "apart from chronic British-baiters in Congress" and "a few flag-waving senators no one here is inflamed against England because of these happenings, nor do informed persons take them seriously."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Atlantic Clipper was ordered to discontinue her stopping at Bermuda, and to proceed direct to the Azores, nor was it until later in the spring that chance revealed the service which British censorship had been rendering the United States Government.<sup>2</sup>

By mid-February, orders were being placed by the Allies for six or seven thousand bombers and a large number of fighter aeroplanes at a cost between three and four hundred million pounds. It was, moreover, freely rum-

<sup>1</sup> Press Association War Special, New York, January 28, 1940

<sup>2</sup> "Head winds that forced the westbound Atlantic Clipper into Bermuda exposed a leak in United States naval secrets—a leak that leads to Nazi Germany. When the Clipper arrived in Bermuda the British authorities there called their disbanded censorship staff together and 1,628 lb of mail was handed them. More than 800 lb of it was mail from Germany. Among this was a letter from a Nazi somewhere which left the British censors gasping. They forwarded it by cable to the United States Naval Intelligence Department here. The contents left no doubt that United States naval secrets were being sold through some foreign espionage agency to Germany. This is a phase of the censorship of foreign mails which has been hitherto overlooked. It is the other side of the picture that critics of British high-handedness—some have even called it 'hijacking'—regarding the United States mails have ignored. Not until someone is definitely under suspicion can American intelligence men search the United States mails."—*Manchester Guardian*, May 2, 1940

oured that the finest models, carrying the latest inventions, were being released to the Allied Governments. Meanwhile, President Roosevelt, in his £2,000,000,000 Budget, had inserted a Defence estimate of £450,000,000.

German espionage and sabotage had followed, on an intensified scale, the system pursued between 1914 and 1919, further assisted by the activities of Russia. The "personalities" interrogated by the "un-American activities" Committee of the House of Representatives were expected to include the Rev Charles E. Coughlin, the "radio priest," and the "Christian Front," the leaders of the Fichte *Bund* and of the German-American *Bund* and of the Ku-Klux-Klan, the notorious anti-Semite, Rev. Gerald B. Winrod, of Kansas, and many suspected Soviet propaganda agents. It was officially reported that "the pro-Nazi German-American *Bund*, whose leader, Fritz Kuhn, is now serving a prison term in Sing Sing for theft of the *Bund*'s funds, has about seventy local organizations in this country, made up of more than 400,000 members, all of these, though of German origin, are American citizens. The organization has been described by a former member of the Reichstag as 'a Nazi reserve in the United States' designed to give Nazi Germany any sort of assistance that it required. It is alleged that, in joining the organization, members take an oath of 'utter loyalty to Adolf Hitler as their Fuhrer'."<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of October the twenty-one American Republics, including the United States, represented at the Panama Congress had claimed their "indisputable right" to see that no belligerent act occurred within the "300-mile safety zone" declared to exist around American coasts. Whilst the British Government were framing their reply to this claim occurred the victory of the River Plate and the scuttling of the *Admiral Graf von Spee*,

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, December 12, 1939

against which the Pan-Americans on December 23 lodged a complaint with the French, British and German Governments. The British Government replied to both notes in January. The Allies could obviously not accept the scheme unless guaranteed that German warships and supply-ships could not use the zone as a vast sanctuary. If the Allies were asked not to capture German ships within the "zone," such ships should be laid up under Pan-American control throughout the war. Little more was subsequently heard of the "zone" thesis.

Early in February President Roosevelt decided to dispatch, as his personal representative, Mr. Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State, on a diplomatic grand tour of Europe. Mr. Welles was not only a distinguished diplomatist but he enjoyed the reputation of being "hard-boiled" as well as "liberal" in politics. He visited Rome, Berlin, Paris and London, gathering and collating information for the President, and was said to have returned to Washington duly impressed by the hopeless divergency of Allied ideals and Nazi aspirations, and consequently not optimistic for the prospects of an early peace.

The United States as a whole continued increasingly anti-Nazi but isolationist and, paradoxically, suspicious of the British (who had for years abandoned even the remotest attempts at propaganda), while indifferent to the ubiquitous ramifications of the Nazi Fifth Column. Nazi agents, acting on instructions from Berlin, pullulated throughout the country, encouraging with equal zeal and skill anti-Semitism and Isolation. Pro-Nazi News Letters abounded, announcing "the French Generals'" plan to postpone the start of the war until two million American soldiers should have reached the Western Front.<sup>1</sup> Slogans such as "Let God save the King," "The Yanks are not coming," "Keep America out of War" were manufactured and circulated everywhere. Though no German



agent dare praise the Fuhrer, public sympathies may be confused by plausible generalizations such as "there's nothing to choose between the two sides" or the Communist "just another imperialist war" Goebbels knew that it was hopeless to try to make his own cause popular in the United States But he could do and did much to make the British cause unpopular He turned the general fog and the minor irritations to good account

As December opened the United States attitude towards the war was incredibly muddled and chaotic The dominant feeling of the country was that England and France must win But behind this feeling was a haunting fear in the minds of many that they might possibly lose, when it was obvious that the United States might have to take steps Therefore, there grew up beside the detestation of Nazis an anti-British sentiment Britain should never have let it happen Now that it happened they were going to try and drag the United States in There arose then what the psychologists call a defence mechanism It was none of America's business The Allies would win all right The States should never go abroad to fight again They were more useful standing guard against Japan and keeping the torch of liberty alight All wars were wrong and American interests were not involved The American Legion was one of the leading organizations in expressing this sentiment

Furthermore, nobody in the United States could see which way the war was going It did not seem to be developing in any fashion they could grasp All was fog Then came the Russian attack in Finland Here at last was something the United States could understand It was the living example of the law of the jungle unleashed on a quiet little nation—and one that the United States liked because she had always paid her debts The attack appealed to the emotions of great masses of Scandinavian

population in important states such as Wisconsin and Minnesota. Its effect was seen when Congress passed a Bill for aid to Finland—passed it with such keen isolationists such as La Follette voting aye. Yet many of these men had opposed the Administration change in the Neutrality Act. This was more than a matter of votes: the eyes of the United States were turning towards the facts of the war, and bitter was the condemnation of the Allies, especially from those who wanted to do more for Finland, when her resistance collapsed. This collapse, as with that of Poland, was turned to good account by German propaganda. At the same time hatred of Russia and of Communism reached a new high level. At the end of six months the very word intervention was, in an Election Year, political dynamite.

The Allies were not always tactful, in their outspoken assumption that, because the States stood for the same ideals, they must therefore join in fighting for them. Americans remembered the Allies' past (though they sometimes forgot their own) in the fatal hesitations, procrastinations and abdications of Manchuria, of Abyssinia and of Spain, which had helped to lower the respect for solemn treaties, for international law itself, and so to bring about the tragic jungle beast-fight now forced upon them, Europe and perhaps the world. Some sections of Allied opinion may, indeed, have shown themselves in speech, and even writing, peevish, petulant and presumptuous, and had been occasionally bidden in unambiguous language to "Quit picking on Uncle Sam." Nevertheless, there had been from the beginning of the war Americans who had perceived, and proclaimed, that the Allies were fighting the grim, perhaps the final, battle not only for themselves but for the survival of European, of Western—ultimately, perhaps, of universal civilization. Dorothy Thompson called aloud: "The

people of the United States should come out from under the bed and look around This is a very interesting and challenging world ”

“The German record,” wrote a later observer,<sup>1</sup> “makes neutrality not merely difficult for Americans but shameful as well”, drawing from the *New Statesman's* Sagittarius, whose pen had been swift and bitter to denounce British derelictions, the commentary reprinted in Appendix II

The  
League of  
Nations

The League of Nations continued to give unequivocal evidence that its responsibilities to-day and for to-morrow were realized, and that it was geared up to the changed situation and new conditions inevitably brought on by the war Its work could be divided into two groups First, the session of the 20th Assembly in December, which had to handle Finland's appeal and arrange for broadening the basis of the League's non-political work, the I L O 's Havana Conference, ending on December 2, and the February Session of the Governing Body, secondly, the continuation of as much as possible of the invaluable routine work of the League, despite serious loss of personnel and reductions in a budget which in the name of economy cut efficiency almost to the bone

Early in December Finland, the latest and most innocent victim of the long line of aggressions stretching back to 1931, appealed to the League, under Article 15 She asked the Council to refer the dispute between Finland and Soviet Russia to the League Assembly as soon as possible The Assembly met on December 11 In war, therefore, the League of Nations was called to condemn aggression By the mere fact of meeting, the States—members of the League showed that the idea of indivisible collective security was still alive in a great many countries The procedure established by the Covenant was closely followed the existence of such procedure in time of

<sup>1</sup> Westbrook Pegler, U S columnist

crisis is of undoubted value. The Assembly set up a special Committee of its members invited Soviet Russia to submit the dispute for settlement (an invitation met with a blank refusal), drafted and adopted in full session a report on the facts, and a resolution which stated and condemned Soviet Russia's aggression as a violation of the Covenant, the Kellogg Pact and her treaties with Finland, and asked the Council to give the verdict. The Council declared that Soviet Russia was expelled from the League. The Assembly concurred on December 14. At the same time members were urged to give Finland all the material help they could and should, while the League technical services in co-ordinating this help were to be placed at once at their disposal.

On the same day that witnessed the expulsion of Soviet Russia, the Assembly adopted the so-called Bruce Report—a scientific plan for the extension of the League's non-political work. This plan was the first practical instalment of League Reform—the adaptation of League machinery to a changed situation, to make the League more universal. The Bruce Committee advised that the League should create a new Central Committee for Social and Economic Organization, with separate membership from the political League (like the I L O) and dealing with all that huge field of economic and social problems which directly affect the lives of the common people of the world. The Assembly unanimously adopted the plan. And early in February a preliminary Committee met at the Hague to settle the scope of the work, the principles of selection and, as soon as possible, the choice of the personnel of the Central Committee, which was to meet in May. It was definitely understood that there should be some eight non-official members, chosen on the ground of special competence and ability to deal with this class of problems on their merits. Among the

questions outlined for examination were (1) the economic situation of nations, population questions, access to raw materials, public credit, economic crises, (2) the welfare of the individual—maintenance of desirable standard of living, nutrition, housing, public health, social services, (3) problems of post-war reconstruction—refugees, demobilization, transformation of war industries, readaptation of the machinery of production and distribution to a state of peace

Even during the last three years of political chaos the International Labour Organization has not ceased to go from strength to strength. There is indeed no more hopeful pointer for sanity and constructive ability for the future in handling matters which concern millions than the way in which the I L O has faced to the desperate disaster of European war, and has been carrying on its work and enlarging it where possible to include problems directly arising out of war. Thirty-eight nations earnestly pressed the I L O not to fail them. It has not done so. During the closing weeks of November and the first week of December the I L O held a Conference of sixteen American members, including the U S A, at Havana. There were no empty places. The many difficulties caused by war—mobilization, closing of frontiers, dangers of murder on the high seas, the uncertainty of travel by land—did not avail to stop the meeting. President Roosevelt welcomed the Conference, "I am confident that it can and will be of service to its members, indeed to society as a whole, in time of war." The Conference reviewed the social problems of special interest to the whole American continent and laid down a wide programme both for the I L O and the States concerned. It completed the work begun at the Santiago Conference in 1936 for social insurance and the protection of women and child workers. It could not be maintained to-day

that the I L O is exclusively concerned with European problems. Finally, outstanding evidence of vigorous solidarity on the part of the peoples and Governments of the American continent was given in a solemn Declaration signed at the Conference. "The representatives of the Governments, employers and workpeople of the American continent proclaim their unshaken faith in the promotion of international co-operation and in the imperative need for achieving international peace and security, by the elimination of war as an instrument of national policies by the prescription of open, just and honourable relation, between nations, by the firm establishment of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and the maintenance of justice and the scrupulous respect for treaty obligations" (in other words, the original gospel of the Covenant), "and pledge the unwavering support of the Governments and peoples of the American continent for the continuance with unimpaired vigour of the efforts of the I L O to accomplish its high purpose of social justice."

Nor was the war able to prevent the Governing Body of the I L O meeting later at Geneva, February 3-5. The places vacant by the absence of Soviet Russia and Italy were, it was decided, to be filled by Holland and Belgium. The Conference decided to hold the annual Labour Conference at Geneva on June 5, the agenda to consist in the main of the important question of methods of collaboration between public authorities and employers' and workers' organizations.

As far as possible, in spite of depleted staff and resources, the technical work of international co-operation taken over by League organs goes steadily on. It has long been recognized by Governments (whether members of the League or non-members such as the U S A and Brazil) that it is economical, efficient and according to common

sense to regulate a large proportion of these matters of national interest through an international body and regular secretariat and expert technique founded on prolonged and varied experience—rather than trust to individual Government action and the luck of spasmodic meetings. This technical work must continue. Under the shadow of the war, for example, the Permanent Court at the Hague dealt with a dispute between Belgium and Bulgaria, and remained in session for further cases. The Radio Station at Singapore flashes messages to vessels in Far Eastern waters, warning them of health conditions in these ports. An intrepid group of League experts are to-day advising China on the reconstruction of parts of her internal life and, at the risk of their own lives, helping her in her campaign against diseases, many of which are the direct result of the Japanese war. Despite the war, the Mandates Commission held a further session December 12-21, and discussed in detail the annual Reports, for W. Samoa, the Cameroons, Togoland, Tanganyika, Ruanda Urundi. These reports furnish complete pictures of the life of the inhabitants of the mandated areas, and describe the efforts made by the mandatory Governments to develop the natural resources and raise the standards of living of the peoples.

The position of refugees—without the League a no-man's job—has been kept continuously under consideration. The latest report of the League High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Emerson, who co-ordinates the work done for refugees, has been issued. The problem of the "Nansen" refugees, i.e., Russians and Armenians, is one of naturalization and employment, that of German refugees up to the war rather one of re-emigration from the countries of temporary refuge. Commissions have been exploring prospects of settlement in British Guiana, San Domingo, Northern Rhodesia and the Philippines.



BOUNDARIES OF THE PAN-GERMANIC EMPIRE AS CONCEIVED BY THE ROSENBERG PLAN. THE NAZI DREAM OF EUROPEAN HEGEMONY





It is not yet possible to see clearly how the war will affect the refugee problem. Much depends on the policy of the belligerents and the demand for labour during and after the war.

There was, indeed, never a more necessary world-institution than the League of Nations. Abandoned by its great originating State, flouted and deserted by arrogant secessionists who took pride in their ignominious rôle of *architectes démolisseurs*, further minished and brought low by encircling battle, murder and sudden death, the League, nevertheless, still shines out, a jewel hung in ghastly night, as the ultimate hope of civilization.

*Elle ne bouge pas, pourtant elle marche* <sup>1</sup>

The worst and most wanton war brought the worst and wildest winter within living memory. The cold was remarkable not only for its bitterness, but for its duration. What the people of Great Britain, in conditions still of relative peace, had to endure sufficed to give them some idea of the torments suffered by homeless underclad refugees driven shivering into the sub-Arctic Polish snows, of the heroism of our Royal Navy and mercantile marine, and of the immortal gallantry, under unspeakable conditions and against hopeless odds, of the armies of Finland.

Blitzkrieg had degenerated into Sitzkrieg, and theories were current that Hitler, having attained all he had publicly set out to attain, might be digging himself in, at all events for a few months, and contenting himself with extracting by terror from the weaker neighbouring neutrals the supplies denied him by the allied blockade. There seemed, therefore, to descend upon the spirit of Civil Defence a feeling akin to that of the old song, "All dressed up and nowhere to go." Paid A R P workers began to be considered a superfluity and an extravagance. Unpaid workers began to wonder why they should bother

<sup>1</sup> [The war] seems not to move—but it's going on

to continue working when "nothing was happening" Apathy, boredom and a certain weariness—not of war effort but of absence of obvious need for effort—began to make themselves felt By the end of the year hardly anyone troubled to carry a gas-mask, and there was a tendency to deride the exceptions, quite good humouredly, as "jitterbugs" From time to time the public was called sternly (and rightly) to order by Sir John Anderson, for their indifference to A R P

Although dividends went down, and taxes—and prices—up, there seemed little decline in what may be termed average spending Restaurants were full, theatres and cinemas far from empty, mannequin parades continued, lips were magenta, talons maroon, waving was not only permanent but incessant (with one or more sausage-rolled horns rampant over the right eyebrow), jewellers, fancy stationers and antique dealers, though now fewer, were still fighting a gallant rearguard action along an increasingly shuttered Bond Street Yet current cash was steadily, demonstrably diminishing Calls upon private and public charity were multiplied There were the gifts for the Fighting Forces, games, comforts and books. Above all, there were appeals for the relief of the unhappy victims of Nazism from Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, for the distress of the Turkish earthquake and for the agony of Finland (A characteristic, and a temporary advantage of brutal aggression is that it not only ruins its victims but helps to impoverish their allies)

The problem of what was, or was not, loyal saving and necessary spending was insistent but unsolved The public were enjoined by Government broadcasts to avoid all purchases entailing imports, but there was a lack of precision in the instruction, which was complicated by a mass of paradoxical exceptions recommended in the daily Press People, for instance, who even in bumper peace

days had considered champagne something of a luxury, now found themselves invited (after duly subscribing to National Loans and fulfilling other duties) to treat their virtue to an occasional magnum, and so assist not only the Customs Revenue but also our gallant allies. In this matter of economy (and not only in this) the public were in advance of the Government, ready and willing to limit themselves and to make sacrifices if only they were given that definite lead which seemed so long in coming. Similarly, warnings about waste—whether of food, paper or other materials—appeared day after day in letters to the newspapers, long before they were considered, or anyhow promulgated, by Authority.

Conscientious objectors continued to be treated with a courteous and indulgent consideration. No alternative compulsory labour was prescribed, and the only criticism in the Press was directed against one or two magistrates who had ventured to express their feelings for some members of the Old Exemptibles. "Conscies" were, indeed, handled with more than good-humoured toleration. Early in February a garrison town filled the place of a clerk who had joined up with a twenty-one-year-old conscientious objector (nor was it until much later that a more important town council decided to retain no "Conscies" on their staff). One of the heaviest prices for the inestimable boon of hundred per cent democracy is its occasional approximation to *opéra bouffe*.

The gravity-removing activities of Baron Haw-Haw did not cease but, perhaps because of the improvement in the B B C programmes, had come to be less regarded. His friends must have hoped that he was better treated in the matter of emoluments than his colleague in Arabic, from Iraq.

"The Iraqi Arab, Yunes-el-Bahri, who has been brought to Berlin by Dr Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, to broadcast in Arabic against Britain and the

Jews, is now a disappointed man. He was promised a weekly salary of £125. When, however, Dr Goebbels learned that Yunes-el-Bahri had been sentenced to death in Iraq as a traitor and that he was now without Consular protection and no longer able to leave Germany, he coolly informed him that he must continue to broadcast without a salary and that all he would get for his work was free board and lodging."<sup>1</sup>

It was strangely instructive to note the wearing off of "nerve-war" effects. After six months' hostilities the smaller adjacent neutrals seemed to have made up their minds that sooner or later they must be invaded. Apprehension from time to time deepened, but never approached panic, even upon reassurances from Hitler that neutrality would be scrupulously respected. The recipients looked to their moat, and kept their powder dry, philosophically regardless of the ruinous cost of indefinitely prolonged mobilization.

Meanwhile, all did not seem to be altogether well between the aggressors themselves, and it was curious how have-nots, hungries, predatories, prehensiles, snatch-and-grabs—under any other name they would smell as sweet—the more they "threw their weight about" into the scheme prepared (often without consulting one another) for years, the more they came up against each others' mutual and reciprocal impacts. There was a lack of precision, of exactitude—above all, of limitation in the declared aims and objects of each. On land, no one seemed to know what might be the ultimate necessities of Lebensraum, might it not resemble an indefinitely expansible suitcase, with ampler revelations at present unrevealed? On sea also there was uncertainty as to where, if anywhere, indispensable *vita* ended and luxury bourgeois *via* began. Was it possible that Thomas Mann was right?

<sup>1</sup> *Free Europe*

"Men who called themselves revolutionary when they were merely out-of-date, thought they could exploit for their own aims a period of development in a world which was not theirs, and of which they had no moral nor spiritual comprehension"<sup>1</sup>

Who, anyhow, could gainsay him when he wrote

"There is nothing to show that England's great hour was in the nineteenth century, and that the twentieth belongs to the 'younger nations'—who were possibly fatally deceived as to the endurance and adaptability of an organization which they are so ready to regard as moribund. The contention that they alone understand life and the future, that they alone should be entrusted with its re-embodiment, and that old Europe must be content to stand aside and let them have their way, is one that will, in all human probability, be dispelled by events, and it must be added that, in this matter, what is probable is completely consonant with what we all desire, for the concept of the future as cherished by the 'younger nations' is far from youthful"

Nearly a hundred and fifty years ago Napoleon Bonaparte addressed from Egypt a letter to the "Citoyen Général" Chanez in Malta, which had recently been captured by the French from the Knights of St John. The message breathes a spirit of entire confidence—not to say exultation, and indicates that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds, both in Egypt (now, in fact, isolated by the British victory of the Nile), and in Malta (where, as another letter revealed, Chanez had been confronted by an ugly mutiny from the Malta Garrison). Both letters were intercepted by the Royal Navy. Under the first, now exhibited in the British Museum,<sup>2</sup> ebullient optimism is accepted and discounted by the sober irony of long vision, in the frail left-hand writing of the one-armed Nelson—"Mark the end"

<sup>1</sup> *This War* Thomas Mann, pp 19-20

<sup>2</sup> Some 3 yards from the document quoted on p 280

## APPENDIX I

Where is young Lance the Leftist, who shouted "Arms for Spain,"

Who doubted so the fortitude of Mr Chamberlain ,  
And if such arms had been despatched would soon have spent  
his breath

On hissing that his countrymen were profiteers in Death ?  
Where are Iscult and Steve, who, hanging posters from their  
necks,

Marched fearlessly to Downing Street and cackled "Save the  
Czechs !"

Who cursed because we did not save the Abyssinian souls,  
But thought it very rash indeed to guarantee the Poles ?  
Oh, where is battling Barbara, who thought it would be good  
To stand against Aggression, till we actually stood ?

And where is spitfire Florence, who confidently swore  
That if we threatened war enough there would not be a war ?  
Where is young Know-all Nesta, so mystically sure  
That anything that Russia did was peaceable and pure ,  
And, while of course our Empire caused her honest blood to  
boil,

Explained that Righteous Russia would not pinch an inch of  
soil ?

Where, too, is Percy Pink, who backs a loser every race,  
But, like the happy tipster, loses neither funds nor face ?  
And where is Modern Mervyn, who was bubbling fire and  
sparks

But cannot aid the war because it's not in aid of Marx ?  
And what of Comrade Chris, who thinks democracy such  
fun——

Always excepting anything our Parliament has done ,  
And Ermyntude, who wants free speech and voting every-  
where,

Although, of course, in England an election's never fair ?

Where are the youthful geni who know exactly how  
The Cosmos should be managed ? For their chance is surely  
now

Where are the New School Knickers who despise the Old  
School Ties ?

What do they do to show themselves more good and brave and  
wise ?

Their sisters are in hospitals , their brothers won't be long  
But they are still explaining where the Government was wrong,  
Or in *The Bilious Weekly* very lengthily expound  
The reasons why they think their "ideology" is sound ,  
While Reginald, who actively can not assist the war  
Proclaims the right to know at once what he is fighting for  
Where Melvyn is, or Barbara, we simply do not know  
But Lance, I hear, is lecturing in Prudence, Ohio

A P HERBERT,  
*Punch*, November 1, 1939



## APPENDIX II

O GOD ! O WASHINGTON !

(After Samuel Butler)

Far away in the United States of America

The isolationists bury their heads in the sand, saying

"The belligerents are six of one and half-a-dozen of the other,  
But great is the Monroe Doctrine, rich the blessings of abstract  
neutrality,"

O God ! O Washington !

Neutral through thick and thin in the old brave battle for  
freedom

They voted credits to Finland solely for agricultural imple-  
ments

While trading arms to all comers on a cash-and-carry basis  
That they might be without reproach in the sight of the  
aggressors

O God ! O Washington !

And the voice of reason crieth to the isolationists, saying  
Ye who prefer the gabble of Gobbels to the gospel of freedom,  
When Britain is Hitler's doormat and France Mussolini's  
cupidor

Think ye to escape a kick on your large white naked posteriors ?

O God ! O Washington !

But the voice of reason falleth unheard on the isolationists'   
posteriors

The elevation of which blasphemes the principles of democracy  
Geese once saved Rome but the ostriches of the Capitol will not  
save America

O Thomas Jefferson ! O Walt Whitman ! O Henry James !

O President Roosevelt !

O Washington ! O God !

SAGITTARIUS

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